THE

CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

NO. XI.

CONTAINING

SEVEN SERMONS

ON THE

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN,

FROM THE WORKS OF

REV. G. J. ZOLLIKOFER, AND REV. G. WARKER.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Page

On Parental Example. 7

GENESIS xviii. 19....*For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

SERMON II.

On the formation of the minds of children. 21

PROVERBS xxii. 6....*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

SERMON III.

On the formation of the hearts of children. 47

PROVERBS xxii. 6....*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

SERMON IV.

On training up children to the primary virtues. 82

PROVERBS xxii. 6....*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

SERMON V.

On training up children to religion and to christianity. 103

EPHESIANS vi. 4....*Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

SERMON VI.

General observations and rules concerning education. 136

EPHESIANS vi. 4....*Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

SERMON VII.

Some of the principal and most usual faults in education. 165

EPHESIANS vi. 4....*Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

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SERMON I.

ON PARENTAL EXAMPLE.

BY REV. GEORGE WARKER.

GENESIS XVIII. 19.

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

NEXT, at least, to the interest in ourselves, the interest in our children is designed by God to sit near our hearts; and it has that grace which the attention to our own interest has not; it is of a benevolent aspect, and therefore not only approved but beloved. But the vast influence which it has on the character of mankind is sufficient to account for the wonderful provision God has made for it, by the strong instinctive affection of the parent to his offspring. One generation passeth away, and another succeedeth; they who are now born into the world are to inhabit it, and act their parts therein, when we

have quitted the stage. It depends on our care of them, while they are with us, whether they shall act their parts well ; in this our own present comfort is found, the most generous debt of a parent is paid, we have nobly done our duty, and we leave the world with a more virtuous cheerfulness, when we can look forward to the future reputation, usefulness and happiness of those who are so highly dear to us.

From this testimony of the best judge of merit, to the parental character of this renowned and venerable patriarch, there is a fair invitation to address you on the parental duty. But I mean to attend only to the more valuable part of a parent's duty in the nurturing of their minds, enriching them with the principles and the habits of right behaviour ; with every thing which wisdom, virtue and religion recommend to a being who can carry nothing but his mind, his moral character, into that other world for which he is destined. At this time I shall confine myself to the obligation of parental example.

Example ; a severe demand ; but till God and human nature please to moderate this de-

mand, awfully required of every parent. O thou silent, but powerful teacher! and must I then answer to thee, not only for my own character in life, and my own hopes of acceptance before the moral Judge of the world; but to thee also for the efficacy of my instructions to my children, for the preparing them to walk with credit and utility before men, and meet the trial of the last day with a well grounded expectation? Why, so it is; our precepts are but as a dead letter, our discipline is but as the whipping of the school, which the next boyish play obliterates, if both be not rendered venerable by presenting the face of that virtue in our own tenour of life, which we wish to recommend to our children.

Every circumstance which can give force to example is found in the character of children, and in the relation of a parent to them. The early business of life is more to see than to reason; and the acquisitions of infancy and youth are caught by imitation, rather than adopted on conviction. It is therefore perhaps of more consequence what they see, than what they hear; for though the best effect is certainly produced where instruction and exam-

ple go hand in hand, yet the wisest lesson is erased from a youthful mind by the imprudent or vicious example of those whom they revere or love. Vicious examples they *must* combat in the moral trials of life, nor is it easy by whatever means to resist their pernicious influence; but as the virtuous example of a parent is the best corrector of the contaminating commerce of the world, so the poison of a vicious example in so respected and endeared a character is generally incurable. The parent is the God of our youthful days; and it behoves him in our presence to preserve as much as possible all the character of God. To be debauched by the very object of our worship, is to give vice possession of our understandings.

I do not bid you therefore on this occasion to follow virtue for her own sake, for her native loveliness, for that dignity of character which she confers, for that peace of mind which she sheds like the balmy showers of the spring, for that favour of God which she promises; this is the usual business of our address to you. But, whatever you determine for yourselves, assume the appearance of

all that is decent, wise, and good in the presence of your children, as you would witness any sincere affection to them, you would not add to the racking thought of having ruined yourselves, the almost equally racking one of having ruined your offspring; as in the hour of death you would have no guilt to answer for but your own; as you would wish to be recommended to mercy for having ministered to innocence, to virtue, for having guarded the moral image of God in those, whom your God has confided to your protecting hand.

These are just, you will say, but severe maxims. Ah! so they are, and I wish I could abate of their severity; I wish I could tell you that you may safely bring all your follies and vices into the presence of your children, or that the effect of your example upon their minds is not one of those important accounts for which you will be questioned at the bar of God; I wish————O! no I wish no such things; I wish only as God has appointed; respect the likeness of God in your offspring; respect it in yourselves; and before them suppress every irregularity, com-

mand every passion, hide every vice, and be as a protecting angel to them, in the appearance, if not in the reality of innocence and virtue.

And, trust me, it is no such difficult task which I enjoin. You must indeed soberly resolve, and you must steadily attempt; but having done this, you will find the practice easier than you have any conception of. Love will work greater wonders; and if many a parent would but calmly ask himself what his love to his children aims at, what he would most wish for them; whether he would not wish for them wisdom, innocence, temperance, piety to man and piety to God; he would walk with more circumspection in their presence than many do; he would answer for this at least, that his own conduct shall not be the means of dispoiling them of any of these fair characters.—We each of us know our own failings; which of these failings have we not the power to curb and hide on many occasions? And can life furnish a more respectable occasion than the innocence of a yet untainted mind; and especially, one whom nature bids us so dearly love, undergo so many

table occasion than the innocence of a yet untainted mind; and especially, one whom nature bids us so dearly love, undergo so many toils, so many self denials for? Yes! the innocence of a child is the most respectable object which we can look upon; it is that secret charm which gives to innocency its loveliness; it is the picture of that which we all long for, which in many a serious hour we regret not to find in ourselves; it is as the face of heaven to us; and cursed is he who stamps the character of hell upon it. But where this enemy is found in the person of the parent, it is enough to leave him to his own reflections. I have seen drunkenness collect itself, when a child whose innocence it respects has come athwart it, passion be calmed as the mildness of the morning, and profaneness seal its lips; in fine what is it, that a parent cannot do, in regulating and commanding his own behaviour, who affectionately and virtuously resolves to protect the innocence of his child, to correct by his own example the ill commerce of the world, and be himself the minister of nothing but what is good to it?

Do not tell me that in clothing their bodies, in amply furnishing their tables, in introducing them into the busy and pleasurable world, in toiling and denying yourselves to make them great and rich, you have shewn the strength of a parent's affection to them. Do less of this if you please; be less niggard to yourselves, and take a more cheerful draught of life; but in your debt to your children, let it be your chief attention to save them from pollution; to render them back into the hands of God meet for his holiness to receive; to shew them nothing in your own conduct which can debauch them, nothing but what is of a moral tendency;—do this, or you have yet to learn, what it is to love them.

I dare not however promise you, even in this, an infallible success; but this is, under God, the best road to success. If any thing can save your children in a dangerous world, if any thing can render them what God designed them to be, what every honest and affectionate parent would wish them to be, this will do it. You have at least done your duty to them; you have nothing beyond the pardonable inattentions and carelessnesses

of human nature to reproach yourselves with in that hour, when you must take your leave of them, and pass into the world of spirits to give an account of your charge to the great parent of all.—I dread in my own person to offend my God; I dread to meet an offended God; but I would rather have whatever sins upon mine own head, than the same sins on the heads of my children as the consequence of my immoral behaviour to them. It has less to plead in excuse; it argues a more guilty and abandoned spirit. To answer for the ruin of another is terrible; much more when it is a sin against nature; when it is wounding love and benevolence in their dearest walk, for which the God of nature has made so kind and rich a provision. Take heed that you offend not one of these little ones; it were better for you that a mill stone were hanged about your necks, and that you were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Thus much for example.—Whether I have at all answered the vast importance of it, is for you to judge; or rather it is to be decided by the instant emotions which you feel. I wish you indeed to feel as I feel myself; I

wish to raise in you a sense, an abiding sense of the indispensable necessity of all that is decent, sober, virtuous and pious in the conduct of a parent before his child.—And this you all in a considerable degree can do; yes, the the very worst of you; for it is not demanded of you to be good; but to appear such in those delicate moments, when the eyes of your children are upon you. And if you should insensibly cheat yourselves into real goodness, if in attempting a virtuous walk in the presence of such endeared objects, you should be allured into the regular habit of virtue, no injury is done you; you will be saving yourselves as well as your offspring, and your task will thenceforward be more natural, and more easy, and more pleasant to you.

I have finished therefore, unless you will permit me to close with some general observations of the importance of the subject on which I have presumed to address you. Though if the things which I have noticed be of consequence in the parental character, and I have contributed to draw forth and illustrate this their consequence, I may be thought to have done enough. For he, who

will not be determined by this single consideration to conform his conduct thereto, will be insensible to every motive that can be offered. Duty has no access to that mind, which resists the pleadings of parental affection.

But many have very narrow and contracted views of the importance of the parental character; they contemplate it only in the interested relation which attaches them to their offspring, and, subverting the designs of providence in obeying the instinct which it has given them, they view not the wide range of publick good to which providence designs the individual acting of every parent to minister. In a wise education, whether we have it in view or not, we are doing the best service to human kind. For the ultimate end of all our attention to our children is to fit them for acting their part on the great theatre of the world with credit to themselves, and satisfaction to their fellows; to answer to the demands of every relation in which they may stand; to do the duties of virtuous citizens, to sustain the honour of human nature.—The office of a parent therefore cannot be neglected without the most ruinous consequences to the

individual and to the publick ; those consequences which appear in a general depravity of manners, or terminate slowly or rapidly in the dissolution of the most flourishing states. Without some pains to cultivate the minds of the young, to season them with the principles and practise them in the habits of wisdom and sound morality, what is to be expected from them but ignorance and profligacy ? which though it may not immediately appear in the form of an unpolished barbarism, yet is capable of greater enormities, of a more unprincipled conduct ; and by dissolving all the bonds by which a well civilized community is held together, ends at length in rudeness and barbarism. The selfish dissipation which diffuses itself through a luxurious community, appears, as its last character, in the horrid form of indifference to children ; and thus every succeeding generation becomes worse than the preceding, till ignorance as well as vice predominates ; and then all traces of the manly and christian character are done away ; the love of country with all its generous train of virtues, appears no more on the active stage ; and all the foundations of human happiness,

and all the sublimer ends of human life are annihilated.

Capacity as well for knowledge, as for virtue and happiness, is the gift of God : Education, Habit, Exercise bring forth this capacity, and constitute all the difference that is found between man and man. However rich the soil, without culture, it is luxuriant only in weeds. The inequality which appears so striking in the characters of men, is more owing to education, than to any natural difference ; at least with respect to moral character, which is the great object that I have in view. Even in view of mere knowledge and wisdom, the difference which education produces is vast and astonishing. It is this which opens and illumines the human mind ; which enlarges and strengthens all its natural powers ; which, sitting as it were on a rising ground, gives it the most extensive and commanding view of the word of God, of human life, and of human nature. This unlocks all its secret treasures ; brings into exercise all its native force and dormant virtue ; and, compared with an untutored and uncivilized mind, exhibits it like a God. In fine, it is ed-

ucation that works so many wonders in man ; that polishes our manners, stamps a worth and dignity on our views, forms to wise and good conduct, leads to happiness and constitutes the grand difference in the human species. To every thing which is the true glory of man, in the useful and elegant arts of life, in the protecting forms of civil polity, in the intercourse of social life, in the higher walks of virtue and religion, *education makes the difference.*

If you have not betrayed the most glorious trust which the creator can confide into your hands, you may go into the presence of your Lord and wait his audit, with the virtuous hope of his approbation, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over the charge which I committed to thy care, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

SERMON II.

ON THE FORMATION OF THE MINDS OF CHILDREN.

GOD, thou hast endowed us with understanding and reason, and thereby granted us great prerogatives over the other inhabitants of the earth! Yes, thou hast thus made us capable of elevating our minds to the knowledge of thee, and of being hereafter admitted to the society of superior spirits. Thou wilt that we should here cultivate our understanding and our reason, as far as the imperfections and infirmities of our present condition allow, and learn to employ them in such a manner as to become wise and happy. Oh, preserve us from degrading our souls, from disregarding our prerogatives and leaving our faculties unemployed! from debasing ourselves, by an entirely sensual and carnal life, to a level with the brute creation, and thereby rendering ourselves unqualified for being and becoming

what, according to the designs of thy wisdom and benignity, we ought to be and to become! Teach us rather to recognize the dignity of our nature, and to act consistently with it. Grant that we may faithfully use all the means and opportunities for becoming more intelligent and wise, and for making farther progress in the knowledge of truth. But grant us also the grace to be as useful to our brethren, in this respect, as we at all times can be, every one according to his station and calling. Vouchsafe especially to those among us, to whom thou hast committed the culture of the minds and the hearts of children, such a portion of light, of zeal and fidelity, as is necessary to the discharge of the duties incumbent upon them. Give them a clear perception of the importance of their office, that they may contend with the utmost prudence and resolution against the difficulties attendant on it. Bless, to this end, the instruction we are now about to receive on this head, and hearken to our prayer, for the sake of thy son, our saviour, in whose name we farther address thee, saying: Our father, &c.

PROV. xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.

PARENTAL affection being so natural and so powerful an instinct; parents so readily consenting to sacrifice their own happiness to that of their children, and in some measure to live rather for them than for themselves: it is really surprising, that they are not more concerned about their education, or that they fall into so many and such grand mistakes in respect to it. Doubtless the reason of this lies not so much in the want of tenderness and affection, as in the wrong and incompetent notions generally entertained of education. That is, this duty is but too often confined to the care of providing for the life and the health of the children; of teaching them some mechanical works and arts; loading their memory with a multitude of words which they do not understand; instructing them in the rules of external propriety of behaviour and politeness; warning them of the grosser enormities which are followed by punishment and disgrace; divesting them of their natural simplicity and openness of heart, and instilling

into them the arts of reserve, dissimulation and flattery; communicating to them a few notions, for the most part false, of the occupations, the pleasures and advantages of social life; and rendering them dexterous in some method of gaining a livelihood, or managing their estates.

In these respects the generality of parents are not wanting either in pains or expense for promoting what they term the benefit of their children, and in fact they thus do contribute much to their welfare. May we not therefore have reason to hope that even this might be done in a still more profitable manner, if men had juster conceptions of what belongs to education? It is this that has moved me to show you, in several discourses, what is peculiarly requisite in the education of children, and how we are to set about it. It principally consists in the forming of their minds and their hearts, and in the best method of leading them to religion and to christianity. To day I shall discourse of the forming of the minds of children.

To form the understanding or the mind of children, implies, to give them right notions

of things, and to habituate them to such a way of thinking and judging, as is consonant to truth, and by which they may become wise. Successfully to perform this duty, take into consideration the following rules. The first is this: Repress not their curiosity or their inquisitiveness. It is in itself no fault. It is rather a strong impulse and an excellent means to become intelligent and wise. And it generally proceeds from ignorance, or pride, or indolence, or petulance when we authoritatively impose silence on children that ask questions, and chide them for impertinence and idle curiosity, if they are not satisfied with the first answer we give them. Indeed children should learn to behave with modesty, and particularly when in the company of strangers, who are not present on their account, but on that of their parents. But their parents, their guardians, and tutors, will lose the best opportunities for instructing them, if they constantly require them to be dumb in their presence, and only to remain silent hearers. No, it is their duty, and if they love their children or their pupils, it will be their pleasure not to answer their questions with a testy Yes or

No, but to answer them in such a manner as shall amply instruct them in what they wanted to know, and at the same time be entertaining to them. Nay, they will eagerly seize on these opportunities for exercising the reflection of the child or the youth, and by continued questions to make them the discoverers of what they did not know before. And even should their questions be of such a nature, that their parents or their preceptors cannot answer them, instead of being angry at it they will confess their own ignorance, or excuse themselves on the imperfection of human knowledge in general, or endeavour to make the inquirer understand, that the answering of his question presupposes knowledge which he has not, and cannot have yet; but which hereafter will amply requite his industry, if he do but persist in acquiring it.

A second rule for forming the mind is this: Accustom your children or your pupils to the use of their senses; teach them to apprehend justly. The impressions which outward objects make upon us by means of the senses, and the ideas that thence arise in our mind, are the materials as it were which our mind

works up, and on which at length is founded all the knowledge and science of mankind. The more various, the more just, the more complete these ideas are, so much the more able is the mind to exercise itself in thought, and the more easily and surely can it ascend to sublimer and more universal knowledge. But since we acquire a knowledge of sensible things, far better from the impressions their presence makes upon us, than from any descriptions of them that can be given us in words ; let your children learn what they may see, hear, and apprehend themselves, not barely from books, or oral instruction, but shew it them actually, whenever you have an opportunity for it. In this manner let them see and observe the beauties of nature, the wonders of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, the various phenomena of the atmosphere, the magnificence of the starry heavens ; and help them by degrees to distinguish and arrange the multiplicity of obscure ideas which from all sides press upon their minds. But let them see all these things with their own eyes, and apprehend them in their own way ; and weaken not the impression they

hence receive by untimely and far-fetched explanations. Lead them into the habitation and the barns of the farmer, into the work-shops of the artist and mechanick; point out to them there, how the various productions of the earth are wrought up, how they are prepared for the use, the accommodation and pleasure of mankind; teach them to know the principal implements and tools employed in these occupations, and to have a proper esteem for the persons that follow them. This will furnish their understanding and their reason, as well as their imagination and genius, with abundant sources of useful and agreeable meditation.

Constantly inure them to attention. Attention is the parent of all solid information. Habituate them not to pass too quickly from one object to another, to consider every matter on several sides, and as far as possible on all; to view it not only in the whole, but in its several parts. It is not my meaning however that you should weary their attention in the first years of their education, by forcing them to tarry too long at one and the same object; but I wish you gradually to convince them in a sensible manner of the great utility of a

more continued attention. This may be done occasionally even in the most trifling matters. They admire, for instance, and are gratified with the beautiful colours or the delightful odour of a flower. Hence you may take occasion to inform them how many other beauties, how many marks of wisdom and skill, the practised eye of the connoisseur would find in the structure of this flower, in the formation of its leaves, in the construction of its pod, seeds and the like. Tell them therefore, how much they might have observed in this or the other object, if they had considered it a little less cursorily, if they had dwelt somewhat longer upon it. This method of exercising and strengthening their attention, will certainly effect more than the most earnest exhortations to duty, and the severest punishment on the neglect of it.

A third rule to be observed in forming the minds of children is this: Beware of giving them false or not sufficiently precise ideas of any matter, though of never so trifling import. It is far better that they should be utterly ignorant of an hundred things, than have wrong notions of one; far better that you absolutely

refuse to answer certain questions at all, than answer them in an ambiguous and inadequate manner. In the former case, they still know that they are ignorant on this point, and may supply the defect of their knowledge in time: whereas in the latter, they think themselves sufficiently informed on the subject, and ever remain ignorant on that very account. Besides, the first ideas we receive of natural or moral objects are as it were the ground plot of all we afterwards acquire. Are they indeterminate and false, then will their baneful influence extend itself to all the rest. Yet how common it is to err in this respect! It is thought that any answer is good enough to the question of a child or a youth. The imposing a palpable falsehood on them is a matter of no consideration, provided they are reduced to silence by it. We console ourselves with thinking that in time they will learn to underststand the matter more truly of themselves. But this expectation is extremely fallacious. First impressions always last the longest, whether they be in conformity with truth, or mislead us into errour. And even if a man in riper years find out his mistake,

yet must he be ever on his guard lest it slip into his ideas and apprehensions, and deceive him again. Give a child, for example, the false idea, that thunder and lightning are the effects and tokens of divine displeasure, and that they are sent to terrify and to punish the inhabitants of the earth. How deep will this opinion settle itself in his mind! How difficult will it be for him even in a maturer period of life, to take what he has so long considered as an evident proof of divine indignation, for the effect of supreme wisdom and benignity! And even if the youth or the man dismiss that errour and adopt this truth, yet how often will the impression which still remains, from the first mode of representation, unconsciously lead him to false conclusions, or overwhelm him with consternation and terrour! Is not this fault in education that I am speaking of, the reason why certain kinds of superstition are so hard to be rooted out, that they pursue and persecute even persons who actually perceive the folly of them, during their whole lives?

Another useful precept in forming the minds of children, which is closely connected with the foregoing, is this: Set them to learn

nothing which either on account of their tender age, or from the want of other kinds of knowledge necessary to that purpose, they cannot comprehend. Measure not their capacities by yours. Attempt not to instruct them in matters which you yourself can scarcely comprehend, or of which you only in later years have been able to acquire any tolerable notions, after peculiar exertions of your mental powers. In vain, for example, would you labour, by philosophical argumentation, to certify them of the commencement of the world, of the necessity of a first and eternal cause of it, of the spiritual nature of our soul, &c. By such endeavours you would only make them disgusted with your instruction, and they would waste their time and apply their faculties for nothing. Even their memory would not long retain the feeble impression it received from such matters as they could not comprehend. Only that which we learn from consideration, and wherein our mind or our heart is thoroughly interested, can make an impression on us that is not to be effaced by time. Encumber not their memory then with signs or words, without at the

same time augmenting their knowledge with the real information they are intended to convey. On the contrary, allow them in the use of no words to which they annex no signification, or one that is quite different from what should be communicated by them. When you hear them make use of such words and phrases the meaning whereof is probably as yet unknown to them, always ask them what they understand by such expressions; let them signify to you what it is they want to indicate by them; or, if this does not suit, inquire after the properties and effects of it; help them in tracing them out, make as much as possible these properties, these effects, sensible to them; or, if the matter be of such a nature that you can neither shew it to them nor by any other means adapt it to their comprehension, then caution them at least against the misapplication of such words, and teach them to reckon it a mere sound, the meaning of which they must take time to learn. Would the gift of speech be so much misused by the generality of mankind; should we so frequently hear them talk, in so confident a tone, and with so voluble a tongue, of things

which they either do not understand at all, or of which they have very confused ideas, if they had been accustomed in their childhood and youth to think somewhat distinctly at every word, and not barely to attend to the signs, but more to the things signified by them ?

To these precepts, the observance of which will be of great utility in forming the minds of children, another must be added by no means of less importance. It is this : Endeavour not only to increase and extend their knowledge, but likewise to render it solid and sure. It is far better for them to know a few things thoroughly, than to have only a superficial acquaintance with many. Beware of the ordinary weakness of parents and tutors on this head. They often consult rather the gratification of their own vanity, than the real advantage of their children and pupils. If they can talk on many and various subjects with a certain flippancy and confidence, it fills the ignorant hearer with astonishment ; if they are employed in the study of several arts and sciences at once ; if they already, in their childhood or youth, can answer questions which men both in understanding and years will not ven-

ture to decide,—their masters are delighted at the great success of their endeavours. And yet it is impossible that the understanding which takes in so much at once, and must direct its attention to such a diversity of matters, should make proper distinctions among them, and acquire a solid knowledge of all. It will rather get the habit of considering every thing with a transient regard, and of investigating nothing. Avoid this mistake, you who have the care of forming and instructing others. Teach them to think profoundly. Teach them, not only that a subject is, and that it has these or the other properties and effects; but teach them likewise, as far as their capacity will allow them to apprehend, why the subject is so and no otherwise, and why it has these properties and effects. Never require them, either from indolence or self-love, to believe every thing you say on your bare word, or to hold your assertions for infallible oracles. Accustom them much rather to ask you the reason of what you say, and to receive your instruction as truth, not so much out of respect for you, as on account of your arguments. Unless you do this, they will become

in time either scepticks or servile followers of other men's opinions. They will, properly speaking, know nothing; but will only be able to repeat what others have thought and said before them.

The greatest pains, however, you can take, to form the mind of your child or your scholar, will be of little real service to him, if you barely conduct him to knowledge, and not at the same time to wisdom, which consists in the right application of it. This gives you occasion for other rules of proceeding, which are these: Shew them, in whatever they learn, the use they may and should make of it to themselves and others. Teach them to consider every thing on its practical side, and actually to bring it into use on all proper occasions. Make it your principal and constant aim to teach them to judge rightly of the value of things. This is true wisdom, which is of far greater value than all the other sciences together, and which can never be obtained too soon, as it is essential to the proper conduct of life. Teach therefore your children to observe the great difference that subsists between outward, transient, perishable goods and ad-

vantages, and such as are properly our own, and which we continually retain. Teach them to prize health and strength of body more than riches or a beautiful figure; the approbation of conscience more than the esteem and applause of men; and virtue and integrity beyond wealth, honour, health, and life. These are doctrines, which are so incontrovertible, and which may be rendered so comprehensible even to children, that it is almost always the fault of their parents or their tutors, when they learn to think otherwise. Does your child, for example, admire the splendor, the richness, the costliness of some person's dress; ask him on the first proper occasion afterwards, whether a bad man who should wear such clothes would be the better for them; whether they would give a sick man health, an infirm person strength, or communicate to an ignorant man understanding and discretion; whether it would not be much nobler to relieve a number of poor, and to go less splendidly clothed, than to be unmerciful, to leave a brother to languish in misery, and to be swoln with pride under borrowed plumage. Does he make

in time either scepticks or servile followers of other men's opinions. They will, properly speaking, know nothing; but will only be able to repeat what others have thought and said before them.

The greatest pains, however, you can take, to form the mind of your child or your scholar, will be of little real service to him, if you barely conduct him to knowledge, and not at the same time to wisdom, which consists in the right application of it. This gives you occasion for other rules of proceeding, which are these: Shew them, in whatever they learn, the use they may and should make of it to themselves and others. Teach them to consider every thing on its practical side, and actually to bring it into use on all proper occasions. Make it your principal and constant aim to teach them to judge rightly of the value of things. This is true wisdom, which is of far greater value than all the other sciences together, and which can never be obtained too soon, as it is essential to the proper conduct of life. Teach therefore your children to observe the great difference that subsists between outward, transient, perishable goods and ad-

vantages, and such as are properly our own, and which we continually retain. Teach them to prize health and strength of body more than riches or a beautiful figure; the approbation of conscience more than the esteem and applause of men; and virtue and integrity beyond wealth, honour, health, and life. These are doctrines, which are so incontrovertible, and which may be rendered so comprehensible even to children, that it is almost always the fault of their parents or their tutors, when they learn to think otherwise. Does your child, for example, admire the splendor, the richness, the costliness of some person's dress; ask him on the first proper occasion afterwards, whether a bad man who should wear such clothes would be the better for them; whether they would give a sick man health, an infirm person strength, or communicate to an ignorant man understanding and discretion; whether it would not be much nobler to relieve a number of poor, and to go less splendidly clothed, than to be unmerciful, to leave a brother to languish in misery, and to be swoln with pride under borrowed plumage. Does he make

too great account of a fine figure; then shew him other children or grown persons, who with a much less handsome form, are more respected and beloved, as they are more humble, more gentle, more beneficent, and better than they; or tell him of certain persons, who by various accidents have lost the elegance of their form, or who, with all their beauty, have been hated and despised, as not having a beautiful soul, as having no real merit. Is he too much captivated with the praises that are bestowed upon him; take the first occasion to shew him, how prodigal and inconsiderate most men are in the distribution of their praises; how often they praise a thing which they do not understand, do not esteem, do not love; how selfish and fickle they are in their judgments, &c. But, would you have your children or your pupils learn to judge rightly of these and similar things, O you, whom God has appointed to be parents and tutors! then must they never hear any other than right judgments passed upon them by you. If you allow yourselves to be captivated by the lustre of rich apparel, a beautiful figure, and other such outward distinctions, if you yourselves set

great store by these objects, and attribute to them a vast importance by the warmth and gravity with which you treat them, if you yourselves shew to persons decorated by such distinctions a peculiar deference on their account; the very best lesson you can give your children on this article, in the hours of instruction, will be of no effect. But treat these things yourself with a certain generous indifference; esteem and honour true merit alone, under whatever form, in whatever dress or station it appears, and your doctrine, supported on your example, will infallibly produce the fairest fruits.

Another rule, arising from the foregoing, is: Guard them from being hasty in forming conclusions, and avail yourself of all opportunities for leading them, by observations, to circumspection and precision in their inferences and judgments. How many mistakes, for example, may a man commit, who precipitately takes two objects, that immediately follow each other, for effect and cause! How many kinds of superstition, how many errours in natural philosophy, as well as in morality, owe their origin and their subsistence to this

precipitancy ! For example, would the good man, who meets with severe misfortunes and afflictions, be so frequently declared a hypocrite, and the sinner, who succeeds in his undertakings, be pronounced the favourite of heaven, were we not so prone to take natural events for necessary consequences of their good or bad conduct, for infallible evidences of divine complacency or displeasure ? Should we place the losses, the troubles, the calamities, which the virtuous eventually undergo, and which they must endure, to the account of virtue herself, and represent her under the most disagreeable images, if we were not accustomed to consider all things that happen together or in regular succession, as necessarily belonging to another ? This, however, is often derived from early education. At least, it may be very much prevented by it.

But the time will not allow me to pursue these observations farther. By way of conclusion we will briefly draw a few results from the foregoing precepts, which may induce us to put them in practice.

What a difficult task is this of forming the minds of children ! A result which doubt-

less every attentive hearer of my present discourse has already drawn for himself. And in fact, what attention, what application, what unwearied patience, what condescension, is necessary, for teaching a child or a youth to apprehend justly, to think justly, to judge justly! What diversity in the manner of applying these endeavours is requisite to the diversity of human capacities and dispositions! How often does a man find himself obliged to labour in an unfruitful soil; and how easily may tares and weeds get the ascendancy even in a good one!

But the more difficult the task, the more is he bound to exert his faculties to the utmost, who has it to perform, that he may accomplish it with success. This is another result from what has been said, which probably some from indolence may have neglected to draw. The greatest difficulties will be at length overcome, if we contend with them as often as they appear, and neglect no advantage that may facilitate the conquest. This is the case with education in general, and with the forming of the minds of children in particular. If you confine this business to certain

hours or seasons, and then lose sight of it entirely ; if you do not entirely fail in your design, you will certainly accomplish it but very defectively. The mind of the child or the youth is constantly at work ; it is constantly, therefore, in need of an inspector or guide. If you continually accompany him as much as possible ; if you regard and employ, not only the hours devoted properly to study, but also his pleasures and sports, as means and opportunities for labouring at the formation of his mind ; if you turn every accidental circumstance to account for effectuating this design, certainly your endeavours will not be in vain ; the fruit of them will frequently surpass your expectations.

Difficult however as this business is, and much diligence as it demands, it is no less noble and delightful. This is a third result we may derive from our foregoing considerations. What can be more becoming a reasonable being, and what should be more pleasant to him, than to facilitate to another being of his own species, with whom he stands in the closest connection, the attainment to that perfection whereof he is capable, to observe the first

rays of his dawning intellect, and the various effects of the stronger or weaker effulgence of it, to assist the feeble efforts of his still tottering reason, to communicate or remove whatever may promote or retard its progress, to lend our own experience to one still unexperienced, and our force to one yet impotent, to put aside the impediments he meets with in his way, to warn him of the mistakes we ourselves have committed, and to render him an intelligent votary of truth, a sagacious and judicious, a truly wise man? How much must such an one acquire himself, who does this with earnestness and application; and how much may he thereby contribute, not only to the benefit of the individual, but frequently to that of the whole community!

Lastly, I would recommend you to judge from the whole, my friends, whether it be an indifferent matter, whether it be not rather extremely dangerous to leave children long and frequently to the care and in the company of persons totally uncultivated, and with minds full of prejudices and errours! What will, inded what can such persons contribute to the forming of their minds? Are they in a con-

dition, even with the best intentions, to observe the rules of circumspection we have delivered above? Can one blind person safely lead another? Will not your children by frequenting them, get the habit of using words which they do not understand, of forming opinions on matters they are unacquainted with, of connecting truth with falsehood, of preferring the marvellous to the natural, the mysterious to the intelligible, of determining from selfishness and without reason, of maintaining their opinion with obstinacy, and of allowing themselves to be dazzled by every outside shew? And on the other side, how many opportunities do you not thus lose of instructing them, of admonishing them, of correcting them, of encouraging or restraining them, and of turning to advantage the happy moments wherein you may advance them several steps, when you may free them from some errour or lead them to the knowledge of truth? Oh be jealous of this happiness; and be persuaded, that parents and tutors are never more great and respectable, than when standing beside their children or their pupils, and teaching them wisdom by their lessons and

their conduct. This is proper to your vocation; this is well pleasing to the God of order, who has placed you in this station; and by such behaviour alone may you promise yourselves his blessing in this, and his reward in the future world.

SERMON III.

ON THE FORMATION OF THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN.

GOD, creator and father of mankind, thou hast not only endowed us with understanding and reason, and thus put us in a condition to distinguish truth from falsehood, good from bad, but thou hast also given us a heart that can feel the true, the beautiful, the good, which is incessantly in pursuit of them, and tastes the purest pleasure in their enjoyment. At the same time, by the economy which thou hast established in nature, thou hast adorned virtue with various and powerful attractions, and given vice a despicable and hideous aspect. Thou hast accurately adapted thy commands to our wants and circumstances, and so connected all things together, that the observance of thy commands is attended with peace, content and happiness, and the transgression of them with disquietude, misery and sorrow. We thank thee for this unspeakable act of bounty, compassionate Fath-

er. We rejoice in these wise and benign institutions of thy condescending love. Grant that we may always so use both the one and the other, as is conformable with thy design and our real benefit. Let us never separate knowledge and virtue, and labour as diligently at the improvement of our hearts and lives, as in the cultivation of our understandings. Teach us to know ourselves, to keep a guard upon our appetites and affections, to turn them to the best and worthiest objects, and to suppress every inordinate motion as it arises within, that it may not gather strength and become a passion. Vouchsafe us the grace to think and act always as rational and moral creatures, and to seek our happiness on the path of duty and virtue. Bestow these thy blessings particularly on such of us as are employed in the formation of juvenile hearts, and furnish them with all the necsseary talents and endowments for this arduous and important task. Bless to the furtherance of these aims the considerations in which we are now about to engage, and hear our prayer for the sake of Christ, in whose name we further call upon thee, saying, Our Father, &c.

PROV. xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

EVERY superiour attainment of mind to which a man can arrive by reflection and practice, all the sagacity and knowledge he may acquire by its means, are only so far estimable as he is enabled thereby to promote his own real happiness and that of other men. This, however, he can no otherwise do, than by willingly and faithfully following the light of his understanding; by not only thinking and judging agreeably to truth, but likewise by acting in conformity with it; by not only nicely distinguishing between good and ill, but likewise by loving and seeking the good alone, and by detesting and avoiding the ill. His understanding and his will, his sentiments and his behaviour should therefore be in perfect unison. The knowledge of truth should lead him to the love and the practice of virtue. And this, my friends, should also be the aim of a rational and christian education; which consists, as I lately had occasion to mention, not barely in forming the minds, but also the

hearts of children, and in training them to religion and christianity. Of the former, the formation of their minds, we have already discoursed. The second, or the formation of their hearts, shall employ us to-day; and, if it be the will of God, on next Sunday we will take in hand the third, namely, their introduction to religion and christianity.

To form the hearts of children, means to direct their appetites and affections to the worthiest objects, to inspire them with a predominant love for all that is true and right and proper, and thereby to render the performance of their duty easy and pleasant to them. The formation of the heart presupposes, as every one readily perceives, the formation of the mind; and though the latter be in some measure distinct from the former, and may subsist alone, yet the former can by no means subsist independently on the latter. It is inherent in our nature, that our will, on most occasions, should follow the perceptions and dictates of our understanding. We will only that which we conceive to be good; and we abhor only that which we hold to be bad; and if at times we are indifferent or averse towards the

good, and covet and seek the bad, it is that we then consider the good as bad, and the bad as good. The more justly therefore we think and judge, and the more easy and natural this way of thinking and judging has become, so much the juster likewise will be the determinations of our will, and the affections and aversions arising from them. Of course then, the more carefully the understanding of a child or a youth is cultivated and formed, the greater success may we promise ourselves in regard to the formation of his heart; which, in fact, for the most part consists only in teaching him to apply the just ideas and judgments that have been communicated to him, or that we have helped him to acquire, to whatever has any reference to his moral conduct and the happiness of himself and others; in endeavouring to facilitate to him this application by a wise use of every favourable circumstance, and by removing or diminishing the inward or outward impediments which stand in his way, or which may make it very difficult for him to follow the lights of his understanding. In this view, many practices may and should be adopted, and if I may ven-

ture to say so, many artifices used, which are extremely various, according to the diversity of persons we have to do with, and the opportunities that offer. Accordingly, it is not possible, in a discourse that is devoted to the instruction of numbers, to say all that is necessary for every one in particular to know and to observe. We must content ourselves with some general rules of prudent conduct in forming the hearts, or the moral characters of children, and leave the closer adaptation of these rules to the discretion of such individuals as are actually employed in the application of them.

The first rule is this: Study to find out their temperament, and conduct yourself according to it. The temperament is, as it were, the soil that is to be cultivated, and the diversity of this soil is not so great but it may be soon discovered. More or less vivacity and quickness of apprehension, more or less sensibility to good and evil, to pleasure and pain, more or less vehemence in the affections, more or less disposition to rest or to activity, in these consists the principal diversity in what may be called the temperament of children.

All these various temperaments may equally lead either to the virtues or to the vices. To excite and to promote the former and to prevent the latter, is the principal business of worthy parents and honest tutors. Great vivacity, sensibility, activity are excellent qualities, when they are directed purely to good and proper objects, and have reason for their guide. You need not, therefore, stifle or suppress them, but you must spare no pains to give them the best direction, and to keep them within the bounds of moderation. The vivacity of intellect must be employed on important sciences and useful knowledge; the tenderness of heart, expanded to a delicate sensibility to all that is really beautiful, generous, and great; and the activity must be so conducted as to become an officious zeal for being truly serviceable and generally useful. Children and young people who have these qualities, must be frequently and expressly cautioned against the misuse of them, and shewn the evil to themselves and to others that will arise from this misuse. They, on the other hand, who discover greater tardiness in their ideas and actions, who are more

disposed to inaction and sloth, and are more difficult to be set in motion, should not be dispirited and stupified by bitter reproaches or harsh treatment. They are naturally timid, and have little confidence in themselves. They require, therefore, to be handled with greater gentleness and patience ; they should be encouraged, be drawn out of the obscurity which they seek, and be placed frequently in such circumstances as are adapted to make stronger impressions upon them, and to give as it were a new impetus to their intellect. Every temper, as I have already observed, may mislead to errours. Every appetite may degenerate into inordinate passion. Watch carefully over your children, you who have the forming of their hearts, and would conduct them to virtue. Never connive at any failing, and endeavour at its correction as soon as it is discovered. Strive particularly to repress the first evil emotions and desires that spring from their temperament ; and let not the faulty or the bad, to which they are constitutionally most prone, ever grow into a habit ; and if unhappily this be already the case, then let your constant and utmost endeavour be ex-

erted to conquer it, by repre senting to them, in the liveliest manner, the impropriety and the mischievous effects of it, by depriving them of all opportunities that may strengthen them in it, and by inducing them to the frequent repetition of those actions which are in direct opposition to it.

Accustom them secondly to act from principle and design, and not by blind impulse or mere self-will. Make it comprehensible to them, that this is the grand prerogative of the human species over the irrational animals; and that the man who does not make use of this prerogative debases and degrades himself into an inferiour class of creatures. Often ask them, not in an authoritative, but in a familiar and friendly way, why they do this, and neglect that; why they eminently esteem and value certain persons or things, and despise and avoid others; why, among several advantages and amusements that they may have, they choose exactly such and no other; what views they have in such or such occupations and exertions, and the like. Endeavour thus to gain their confidence, that they may disclose to you the thoughts of their heart without re-

serve; and if, at times, they answer your questions merely by saying "I do not know," or, "I cannot tell why myself," yet let not this incite you to displeasure; but help them to find out the reason of their proceedings, of which they themselves are frequently not clearly conscious; converse frankly with them upon the matter in hand, and on the views one may have in such an act; consult in an amicable manner with them, what were the best to be done in such and such events; how a man may most easily and most surely attain to certain ends; and when it does not relate to too important matters, let them chuse themselves, and let them follow their choice without any interference on your part; but remind them afterwards of the mistakes they have made, and of the evil consequences that have arisen from them.—If, farther, you give them particular orders which you will have obeyed; at the same time tell them, if not in all cases, yet you may in most, the true designs and views you have in issuing such orders. Tell them, why you enjoin this, and forbid the other; and endeavour to make them comprehend that your reasons and designs

are right and proper.—Do they, in short, require of you an account of your own behaviour; do they ask you, why on such occasions you act in such a manner; why you sometimes do what at other times you abstain from? These questions are not uniformly to be rejected, as the effect of a culpable impertinence; nor are you to think, that by answering them you give up any thing of the respect that is due to you; rather shew them, that you constantly endeavour to follow the rules of truth and order, of moderation and justice; and if you would have them to act from sagacity and reason, take great care that they have no cause to suspect that you yourself act without reason, and are merely swayed by caprice.

But, thirdly, be not satisfied with teaching them to act from reason, as rational creatures; but teach them to act upon the best and noblest principles, and in pure and beneficent views. Beware of setting only their ambition in motion, and of inciting them to application and duty from no other motive than the idea of the judgment that others pass on them, and the good or bad opinion of them they shall

cause them to entertain. If once you allow this appetite to become the predominant passion, they are lost to real virtue and to real happiness. For the greater part, the most exalted of the virtues must be practised in secret and without any witness ; and he that is only happy in the favourable judgment of mankind,can promise himself but few days perfectly cheerful and pleasant. No, he alone is virtuous, who, independent on the judgment and opinion of mankind, is actuated by an efficacious propensity to whatever is right and good; and he alone can be happy,who can be content with the rectitude of his heart, and the approbation of his conscience. To this virtue and to this happiness, strive to conduct your children, or your scholars, you who are employed in the formation of their hearts. Confer with them at times, whether just, equitable, beneficent, and magnanimous actions are only rendered by the judgment of the spectators just, equitable, beneficent, and magnanimous actions ; whether they are not so at all times and in all situations ; whether they are not so even when no one is by to judge and to praise them ; whether they themselves have ever re-

pented having done some good action in secret, whether they have not even then felt a particular satisfaction in it ; whether there be not an extreme and unalterable difference between truth and lies, between order and disorder ; whether virtue be not productive of harmony and tranquillity as well in the hearts of men as in social life ; and whether vice, on the contrary, is not attended by confusion and discord in both. Ask them, whether they enjoy the same agreeable sensations, the same satisfaction, when they are praised on account of those qualities and actions which their own conscience disclaims, as when they are commended and applauded for the good they have actually done ; and thence teach them to draw this conclusion, that our sentiments and actions must in themselves be either good or bad, proper or improper, let them be judged of as they may by the rest of mankind.

Teach them further, fourthly, in order to render the subject still more comprehensible to them, to attend to the consequences of their actions or of their behaviour. Teach them duly to prize that inward peace, the satisfaction, the cheerfulness of mind, the health and

strength of body, their improvement in knowledge or skill, the esteem and honour, and the other advantages which they have reaped from their honest and proper conduct. Congratulate them on these advantages, and rejoice with them on the occasion. Sympathise, on the other hand, with those who are likely to be deprived of these precious benefits by their own fault, and are only unhappy because they have neglected their duty, or acted contrary to it. Let them likewise, however, feel the bad and pernicious effects of their improper behaviour, as far as is needful for their caution and amendment; and take no pains to free them from such feelings till they have confessed and bewailed their rashness and folly. Shew them, one while by their own, and at another by extraneous example, what disorder, what pains and sicknesses, what dreadful calamities, intemperance in sensual pleasure, the violence of anger and other passions, the want of diligence and industry, prodigality and avarice, and all sins and vices in general, infallibly draw after them; how by little and little they debase and enfeeble the spirit of man, abate his courage, destroy his health,

shorten his life, undermine his outward welfare, reduce him to an unprofitable, contemptible, noxious member of human society, torture his conscience, and bring upon him trouble, wretchedness, and distress in a thousand different forms. But shew them likewise, on the other hand, what ample rewards the upright and virtuous man finds, in the approbation of his conscience, in the repose of his heart, in the idea of the utility and the pleasure he procures to his brethren, in the esteem and love he has a right to expect from them, and in the assurance of the divine complacency and favour; how happy he is in acting upon firm and honest principles; how happy that he has learnt to govern himself, and to set bounds to his appetites; that he can use the faculties both of his mind and body freely and cheerfully to the ends for which they were given him by his maker; that he has no man to avoid, and no man to fear, because he avoids evil and fears God; that he is never dismayed or dejected at any untoward event; that he knows how to assert his real liberty, and is neither the slave of habit, of vanity, or his own cupidity. Admire the happiness of

the virtuous on all occasions and in all its circumstances before your children, your scholars, but do it with a bright and lively countenance, with a sentimental heart; and let them see how much you yourself are penetrated with the value of it, how far you prefer it beyond all riches, all power, all the voluptuousness of the vicious and the vain.

To this rule another is closely united, which is this: Strive to make their duty a pleasure to them. Habituate them to connect duty and pleasure as intimately together in their ideas as they actually are in nature. Shew them, as much by your example as your precepts, that every duty which we heartily and cheerfully fulfil, is compensated with satisfaction and pleasure. By your example, in giving yourself up to the emotions of pure delight in their presence on having faithfully completed some duty. Have you, for example, as a trustee or a friend, adjusted the affairs of a widow, of an orphan, of a distressed friend; have you had an opportunity to reclaim one of your acquaintance from the ways of folly and vice, or occasioned him to do some good action; have you been so happy as to com-

fort and revive some distressed fellow creature, or to afford some effectual relief to a poor sick person; have you discharged the duties of your office and calling with remarkably good success, on do you perceive it manifestly attended by a blessing; or your return from these generous and delightful occupations, to your children or your scholars, let them participate in your satisfaction and joy, make them acquainted with the reason of it, as far as you can without offence to modesty; and thus shew them how amply a man is rewarded by the consciousness of having acted with honesty and propriety. Shew them the same thing by your instructions, by teaching them to remark and to distinguish the agreeable, the joyful sensations which they themselves experience on similar occasions; at the same time comparing them with the dissatisfaction, the perturbation, the dismay, which glide into our hearts against our will when we have not done what we should have done, or have not done it as we ought.—When you exhort them to duty, convince them by your manner, that your aim is not to display your power and authority over them, or to cause them un-

necessary pains and trouble, but merely to promote their perfection and their welfare. Acquaint them with virtue, not as an austere sovereign, as the enemy of pleasure and joy, but as the best, as the only sure means to substantial happiness. Never say to them, that indeed the vicious man is commonly happier in the world than the virtuous; but notwithstanding this, that we *must* be virtuous, because God has commanded it. No, this statement is false, and can only make pernicious impressions on minds which are yet not fully capable of distinguishing the semblance of happiness from happiness itself. Much rather teach them, that we can only be happy by virtue and miserable by vice; that God forbids us nothing except what is bad and noxious, and that he requires nothing of us, but what is even in this world truly profitable and good; that piety and harmless mirth are not at variance, but cherish and promote each other; and that instances wherein the upright and the pious have particularly much to suffer do not frequently occur.

For facilitating all this to them, for teaching them to act upon principle, to act from

the best motives, and to be attentive to the consequences of their actions, and for rendering their duty a pleasure to them, you should accustom them betimes to self examination, which is the most excellent means for constantly becoming more wise and virtuous. Not that you are to impose self-examination on them as a matter of business, that *must* daily be gone through; such constraint would soon make it hateful and totally useless to them. Here you will not assume so much the style of a severe inquisitor or a sententious monitor, as that of a friend, who takes an interest in all that befals his friend, who rejoices with him on account of all the good he has done, and manifests a hearty sorrow when he has been so unhappy as to do amiss. And how many opportunities for this practice must needs present themselves to attentive parents and preceptors! For example, when surrounded by your children, at the close of the day or of the week, when they are delighted and happy in your company, when you let them perceive your tender concern and affection, and thence excite emotions in them of gratitude and reciprocal fondness, and have

gained their entire confidence ; how easy is it then to call their attention to recent transactions and events, and to prompt them to this investigation by some such questions as these : " How have I passed this day, or this week ? Have I done any thing this day, this week, learnt any thing, or exercised myself in any thing which gives me real cause of satisfaction and joy, and which may likewise in future be of use to myself or to others ? Have I, during this time, so far advanced myself in any art, science, or aptitude, as I might have done ? or have I done or spoken any thing of which I should now be ashamed, which probably I may long lament, the hurtful consequences of which I may for a long while feel ? Can there be any one who is now sighing on my account, because I have injured him, or given him an affront : Is there any one now suffering pain or hardships, because I have denied him the relief and assistance which he implored of me, and which I had it in my power to bestow ? Have I said or done any thing that may have caused uneasiness, dissatisfaction, and vexation, to my parents, my teachers, or even to the domesticks that attend me ?"—

Happy both you and your children, if you thus accustom them by little and little to self-examination, if at times you animate them therein by your own example, if you are not ashamed to confess and to deplore your faults in their presence, at least such as you have committed before them, to lament the neglect of the good act you might have done, to rejoice with them in reflecting on what you actually have performed; and in this manner to teach them wisdom and virtue by the contemplation of their behaviour and your own!

Teach them, in like manner, to reap benefit from the conduct of other persons. Are you with them in company (and it were to be wished that you were seldom in company without them,) take notice of what is said and done in their presence, and afterwards enter into an amicable conversation with them upon it. Do this likewise as often as they return home from company in which you could not attend them. They themselves will furnish you with matter enough for such conversations. Children and young people are commonly more attentive observers of what passes in their presence than persons of riper years.

The generality of things have still the charm of novelty for them; and their attention is less interrupted than with us, who often come into company possessed by various cares and intricate concerns. Therefore let your children or your pupils communicate to you the observations they have made on such occasions; and do not prevent them in their judgments by too eagerly obtruding upon them your own. Search out the good or bad impressions the discourse they have heard or the behaviour they have witnessed has left upon them. Endeavour by reason and argument to strengthen the good impressions they have received, and to weaken or obliterate the bad. Caution them against the faults and inadvertencies they have remarked in others. Shew them how injurious these persons thus are to themselves and how much the charms of society are thus diminished. Hold up to them such as have distinguished themselves for their integrity, discretion, humility, prudence and philanthropy, as patterns for their imitation; and teach them how respectable and amiable they will thus render themselves to all men. But never allow them to judge

their neighbour with ill-natured severity. Accustom them much rather to excuse whatever is excusable, and to consider such actions and speeches as are capable of various interpretations, always on the favourable side. Impose it upon them as a duty, never to spread any farther what they have seen faulty or blameable in another, or to laugh and make merry over it; but merely to apply it to their own caution and improvement. By these means you will render their intercourse with others not only harmless to them, but you will make it a useful school of wisdom and virtue.

Finally, to this end call history likewise to your aid. Think not that your children or your scholars are studying history, while they are merely imprinting on their memory a multitude of transactions and events of various degrees of importance, with all their circumstances and effects, that they may be able to repeat them afterwards. The proper end of history is to make us wiser and better; it is there we are to study ourselves and mankind, if we are to reap any real benefit from it. To this purpose, however, children and young persons should have a guide, as they are not

yet sufficiently trained in reflection for seeking and finding this utility without the help of others. But by means of this guidance, history may afford them the same advantage they procure from their own experience; and this benefit they will in fact reap from it in a much easier and less hazardous manner. Ask them therefore, frequently, while engaged in this study, what they think of these or those sentiments and actions of mankind; why they pronounce these to be just, reasonable, generous, beneficent; and those on the contrary, unjust, base, cruel, or inhuman; why they contemplate one with pleasure and satisfaction, but the other with consternation and horrour; why they take more interest in the fortunes of one person than in those of another. Ask them what they themselves would have done in such or such a predicament; how they would have determined, which party they would have espoused; whether they would have neglected that opportunity of doing right, and whether they could have resisted that inducement to do wrong? Apply all that they read and hear to themselves, and to the particular circumstances in which they are at pres-

ent, or are likely to be placed hereafter. Teach them constantly to observe their own hearts, to trace out its latent propensities: and if these propensities are irregular and bad, so much the earlier and more valiently to combat them, since they now so strikingly perceive, from what happens to others, to what excesses and enormities these propensities may impel the man who fondly submits to their sway. In this manner will history at once amuse, instruct, and improve them; it will be an excellent means of forming their hearts, and of making them morally good.

We should now proceed to the particular virtues to which children and young people are principally to be led, and in which they are constantly to be exercised. But the time already elapsed, and the abundance of the matter, allow me not at present to enter upon that important part of education.

I shall therefore conclude the present with an observation, the justness whereof no attentive hearer of what I have already advanced on this subject, will call into doubt. It is this: If, as we saw in our former discourse, the formation of the minds of children be an ar-

duous task, the formation of their hearts is a no less serious and difficult enterprise. It demands great attention, unremitted industry, and unwearied patience; it demands much circumspection and prudence. Parents and preceptors should keep a constant guard upon themselves no less than upon their children; observe every good or bad affection as it discloses itself to view, use every opportunity for strengthening the one and weakening the other; esteem nothing as trifling that may have an influence on their moral character; blend instruction and practice constantly together, and give force and energy to both by their own example; always act upon the same principles and immoveably prosecute the same design, though they should every day meet with new obstructions on the way that conducts them to it. He that pursues this business as the amusement of a leisure hour; he who thinks to accomplish every thing by precept and command; he who treats his children or his scholars, not as rational creatures, which are to be enlightened and moved by remonstrance to goodness, but as machines which require only to be jogged and pushed forward;

he who does not readily condescend to their weakness, and often mentally put himself in their place, for better adapting his instruction and his discipline to their comprehension and wants; he who proceeds one way to day and tomorrow another; to day with an excessive indulgence, and with as excessive a severity tomorrow; he who allows himself to be deterred by the first difficulties he encounters, by the first unsuccessful attempt, from proceeding with diligence, and has not fortitude enough to work whole years with the same assiduity, though as yet, he sees no particular fruit of his labours; he will not indeed, advance far in this important and toilsome business; but he has no one to blame except himself, if his too much interrupted, erroneous, and self destroying labours are almost all in vain. Let me address a word or two to you in particular, who have the happiness to be mothers. You may contribute most to the formation of the hearts of your children. You may labour at it daily and hourly, and your tender love alone can overcome the difficulties attendant on it. But if you discharge your duty in this particular, in its whole ex-

tent, you render yourselves far more useful than our sex, and contribute far more to the happiness of it than all of us can do, whatever office we may fill, in what ever station we may be placed.

SERMON IV.

OF TRAINING UP CHILDREN TO THE PRIMARY VIRTUES.

GOD, how is it possible for not us to perceive, and perceiving not properly to value the eminent endowments which thou hast vouchsafed to mankind above the other inhabitants of the earth! Thou hast exalted us far above the beasts of the field, and made us a little lower than the angels! While they, the beasts of the field, are entirely sensual, cleave entirely to the ground and are irresistibly drawn by their instincts; we can resist our sensuality, control its most violent impulses and stimulations, govern ourselves, rise above the terrestrial and visible, ascend even to thee, and do what we perceive to be right and good and fittest for the occasion. If they exist and live only in the present moment, and neither can learn wisdom from reflection on the past, nor derive hope and consolation from prospects into futurity; yet we in our own

thoughts can connect the past, the present, and the future, and thus multiply our existence and our life, and with perspicuous consciousness rejoice therein. If they, in a very short time are, and become all that they are able to be and to become; yet thou hast made us capable of becoming always more intelligent, always wiser, always better, always happier, and of always advancing nearer to thee, the fount of intellect, of wisdom, of goodness, of felicity. Yes, we are thy offspring! As thy children we are formed after thy image! We have affinity with the angels, are brethren of Jesus thy first born son! We are ennobled by reason and liberty! We are capable of an ever increasing, of an infinitely progressive perfection! We are designed for immortality! And shall we leave our noblest faculties unemployed, or not make the best use of them which we can in our station and position? And shall we content ourselves with any, ever so low a degree of wisdom and virtue, while we can proceed so far, so immensely far in both? What, shall we forget our affinity with superiour spirits, and with Jesus Christ their chief, our relation and com-

munion with God, our destination to immortality? No, never will we forget the dignity and the nobleness of our nature, never our origin from thee, the father of spirits, never our blessed connection with thee. No, the thought and the sentiment that we are human beings, that we are formed after the image of God, that we are capable of so great perfection and happiness, shall deter us from every folly, preserve us from every sin, and render us apt and expert in every good work. Support us in these resolutions, O gracious and merciful father, by the genial influences of thy holy spirit, that we may comfortably and conscientiously transact the affairs of life, innocently and cheerfully enjoy its satisfactions, and patiently bear its troubles and afflictions! Grant that we may more and more intimately feel the worth of our high distinctions and be continually more happy in the use and enjoyment of them! These our petitions we offer up unto thee in the name of our saviour Jesus, and conclude our supplications in his words: Our father, &c.

PROV. xxii. 6.

Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

HABITS of virtue are of the same nature with dexterity in the mechanical or other arts. Would we acquire this dexterity, we must exercise ourselves early and constantly whether in the virtues or the arts; we must learn to esteem and love them in early youth, and thence they will gradually become so easy and so natural, that at length we shall find it difficult to do any thing contrary to the rules of art, or the precepts of virtue. As little as that man merits the appellation of a good artist, who only now and then produces a good piece; so little does he deserve the name of a virtuous man who only thinks and acts at times virtuously, as it were by chance, and at the expense of great pains. Hence you may conclude how necessary it is for us to train up children to virtue with all possible care from their earliest infancy, and continually to exercise them in it, if we would have them truly virtuous persons. And this in fact is one of the most important articles in rational and

christian education, and herein the formation of their hearts or their moral character principally consists.

In our last discourse we saw what was in general requisite to this end, and how we are to set about this formation of the hearts of children. Namely, we should find out their temperament, and conduct ourselves accordingly; we should habituate them to act from principle and design, and not from blind impulse, or mere caprice; we should teach them to act upon good, upon the best principles, and to be attentive to the consequences of their actions; should strive to make their duty their pleasure. For the promotion of these views, we should initiate them in self-examination, and do our utmost to make their intercourse with others, and their study of history, conducive to their improvement.

To these general rules, we will now subjoin a few that shall more especially relate to the chief particular virtues to which children and young persons should be trained up by those whose duty it is to form their hearts or their moral characters.

The first of these rules is this: Inure them

from their earliest infancy to obedience and submission. He that has not learnt this in his childhood and youth is unhappy for the rest of his life. All of us are occasionally brought into situations where it is necessary for us to submit, where we must comply, if we would not run counter to our duties, or bring harm upon ourselves and others. Either we must avoid human society altogether, renounce all its advantages and pleasures, and take up our abode in the holes of the rock, or the dens of the forest; or we must sacrifice a part of our natural liberty to the security and quiet enjoyment of the rest, subject ourselves to certain restraints, and alternately yield to each other. But how unfit must he be for this, who has for ten, fifteen, or a greater number of years, unmolestedly followed his own inclinations, who has suffered no opposition, whose wishes for every thing he saw were so many commands uniformly submitted to by the blind indulgence of his parents and tutors, and who now all at once must adopt a quite different course of action! The time is arrived when he must make his entrance into the world. At every step he meets

with obstructions. His wishes are scarcely noticed, while he expects to see all men running to fulfil them. They much rather openly oppose his desires and aims. His vanity and arrogance will be offended one while in this manner and then in another, but the disease is too inveterate to admit of a cure. Unfortunate man! Deplorable victim of extreme fondness and indulgence! How often, when once they come to reflection, how often wilt thou lament this cruel tenderness! How often wilt thou wish that thy parents, thy preceptors, had exerted their proper authority over thee, and taught thee obedience! O ye parents, would you spare your children these sighs, these complaints, and the miseries that extort them; inure them to discipline, I say, to discipline, for by precept and exhortation alone you will never succeed; exercise them in obedience and submission. Allow yourselves to be easily prevailed on; frequently go before their requests, when they ask for things innocent and good; and shew them by facts how much you have their real satisfaction and their real happiness at heart; but never should they obtain any thing from you by force; nev-

er yield to their impetuosity or clamour; let not the tears of stubbornness melt you to an ill-timed compassion. Enjoin them nothing without mature deliberation, without sufficient reason; let the justice, the equity, the indulgence that is due to their age and weakness, be the rule of all your commands; but when once you have delivered them, never think of a repeal, but absolutely insist upon the most punctual and unreserved compliance; and let neither headstrong opposition, nor artful flattery, move you to the revocation of them. Beware however of issuing too many, or too different orders at once. You will thereby lay an insupportable yoke on their necks, and in some measure compel them to disobedience; or you will make timid vassals of them, impatiently waiting for the moment when they may misuse their freedom without reproof or observation. Leave therefore to their own option whatever is in itself indifferent and can have no prejudicial influence on their morals; and be content sometimes in furnishing them with useful suggestions and reasons by which they may determine for themselves. Imitate herein the great lawgiv-

er of the universe. Consider how much he has left to our free agency, and how greatly he has thus facilitated our obedience to his commands! The neglect of this rule, my friends, is the principal cause that so few children learn obedience. If we will be always heaping command upon command, and regulating as it were every posture, every word, every look, every motion of the child, or the youth, by law, we ourselves cannot be attentive to all these commands, and must of necessity pass over many transgressions of our laws in silence; and by this means the rest of our laws and ordinances, even the weightiest of them, lose their force, and disobedience becomes habitual.

Father, inspire your children with a predominant love for truth, for sincerity and frankness. These qualities are all natural to them. You need only cherish them. You need only not suppress them. Never therefore laugh at their honest simplicity. Take heed lest by so doing you train them to dissimulation, to falsehood, to flattery. A lamentable necessity will teach them in due time, not to say all they think; but woe to them and to you, if they learn to

say the reverse of what they think. The man who has been brought up in his childhood and youth to falsehood, to dissimulation, to flattery, to whom these vices have been recommended as the primary rules of discretion and of polite manners, will almost always become either a noxious or a very troublesome and disagreeable member of society. He will thence inure himself to artifice and deceit, and in his dealings with others will not scruple to make use of every trick and device he can think of which is not expressly forbidden by law. He will be exceedingly fickle in his judgments, and will commend and esteem today what yesterday he condemned and despised. He will be liberal in his marks of respect and professions of friendship even to prodigality, and yet think of nothing less than the performance of them, unless stimulated to it by necessity or self-interest. He will never dare to oppose unjust and corrupt undertakings and actions, if originating with persons to whom he is used meanly to crouch and cringe. He will in short be incapable of true friendship, which not only disdains all falsehood, but even dislikes reserve: and what a

comfort of life, what pure satisfactions, is he thus kept a stranger to!

Do we not even daily complain of the very faults and imperfections of social life which I have just been speaking of? Why then should we propagate them to future generations? Why are they recommended to children and young persons as good qualities and as virtues? Why is it so frequently imputed to them as a crime when they speak the truth, or on any subject disclose the thoughts of their heart? Why praise, why reward them with particular regard and affection, when they artfully admire and repeat whatever they see and hear, for the sake of insinuating themselves into the good graces of others? Oh, avoid all these too common faults, you who are parents and tutors! Train up your children, not to be servile sycophants, but to be noble-minded men, who know how to value themselves, who love truth above all things, and never are shy of speaking it whenever their duty or the benefit of others requires it; and be assured, that no upright, sincere, open-hearted man ever lamented that he was upright, sincere, and open-hearted, that he was a foe to all

dissimulation and flattery. On the other hand however, seek to preserve your children from prating and babbling. Teach them, in their judgments and discourses, to proceed with caution and consideration. Shew them how much uneasiness we may by this means occasion to ourselves and others; and how disagreeable a man must be to company, when he seems resolved to be the only speaker, and stuns them with all the thoughts and stories he can croud together, whether good or bad, without distinction. Accustom them to secrecy in regard to such things as duty forbids them to reveal. Entrust them at times with a secret; and let the manner of their procedure with it be the rule of the greater or smaller degree of confidence with which you shall afterwards honour them.

Train them thirdly as early as possible, to diligence, to method, and to industry in their affairs. Represent to them how just and reasonable it is, that every one should make the best use of his talents, of his abilities, of his time, and of his property; and how unjust it would be, to require the assistance of so many

other persons, without granting them all possible service and help in return. Shew them how intimately all mankind are connected together; how much one man has need of another; and how advantageous it is for each in particular, and for all in general, that they strive with social ardour to promote their mutual welfare. Teach them how much a man facilitates his business by method and regularity; how much esteem and confidence it procures him from others; how richly unabated industry at last repays him; what an excellent means application is for preserving us from sins and follies and from the insupportable burden of a languid mind; and how pure, how great the pleasure of the industrious man, when he reflects on the work he has duly finished, on the difficulties he has overcome in the progress of it, and on the utility he has procured by it to himself and to others. Would you deeply impress these maxims on your children, and at the same time go before them with your example; would you keep them constantly employed in some useful occupation, as much as their age and their powers allow; teach them to adapt every particu-

lar to its proper time, and see that all they have to do and to provide for be done and provided for with due precision: the love of order and diligence will by this means become natural to them; they cannot thenceforward be other than orderly and diligent; they will not in future regard the affairs of their calling as a grievous burden, and postpone them to every fleeting amusement; and thus they will be far more securely preserved from indigence and penury, and rendered far more useful members of society, than by your leaving them never so great riches, with contrary dispositions.

Fourthly, be very careful to bring them up to humility and modesty, which are so becoming in all men, and especially in children and young persons, and at the same time are so necessary for the advancement of their perfection and happiness. Praise them not on account of such privileges as they have not themselves acquired, but are indebted for merely to their birth or station; and allow not others to inspire them with high notions of their descent, or of their opulence. Teach them to consider all such as honour and extol

them on these accounts as base flatterers, or as ignorant and self-interested people, who either think quite differently from what they speak or are endeavouring by this means to serve their own private ends. Shew them how little real value these outward distinctions have, how easily they may be lost; how much they oblige their possessor to an eminently good and generally useful conduct; and how despicable they render him, if he either misapply them or be still less virtuous and useful than another, who has neither so many means nor so many incitements to it. Neither however must you plume yourself on such distinctions; despise not the poor and needy, and honour only wisdom and virtue and integrity, whether environed by the glare of prosperity, or accompanied with want and misery. Give them a modest opinion likewise of their natural or acquired endowments, dispositions, abilities, and virtues. Teach them how ignorant and feeble man is in himself; how dependent he is in all respects on the will of the great author of nature; how soon, by a hundred accidents, he may be hurled down from the dangerous height to which he has climbed.

Teach them, how imperfect and insignificant the greatest human knowledge and virtue is; how likewise in this respect the major part is obtained from instruction, from education, from outward circumstances, and all ultimately from the providence of the Almighty. Shew them how far they are excelled in all these matters by so many others, who probably have had fewer helps and encouragements; and how much they have still to do, for becoming so wise and good as they may and should become. Exercise them in meekness, principally when they even think themselves affronted, or when they have not met with that respect and honour to which they imagine they have a right to pretend. Remind them now of their own infirmities and failings, of their deficiency of all positive merit, of the great candour they themselves stand in need of from others, of the inconsiderateness with which most men speak and act. Make them comprehend, how liable we are, even without any bad intention, without being of a malicious disposition, merely from imprudence and indiscretion, to say or to do someshing

that will displease another, and is susceptible of a very bad interpretation; and ever beware of rendering their little differences of importance, by your taking too great a part in them, and treating them as things that highly deserve attention, or that bring your own honour in question.—Exercise them much rather, on all occasions, in placability and magnanimity. Instead of addressing them, as it but too frequently happens, in such terms as these —"This is what you should never put up with, you should not let that pass unrequited, unfriendly behaviour should be returned with the like"—much rather let this be your advice: "You should be above regarding such trifles; they are not worth your notice, much less your uneasiness; think yourself happy if you are wiser and better than another; and pity such as are less wise and good than you, but hate them not."—In this manner let not your children live long in disagreement with each other or with other persons. Shew them rather how irksome and unpleasant such a situation is, and of how much satisfaction and benefit it deprives them. When any dissention has arisen, bring them together, and rep-

resent to them how insignificant the ground of their disagreement is, and how easily they might have seen that themselves, if they had more deeply investigated the matter, and not have taken it up in so much haste. Absolutely forbid them all revenge, even when the object of it is only an animal or some inanimate thing; and teach them, as soon as they are able to comprehend it, that only the sentiment of guilt and weakness suggests revenge; but that conscious innocence and power are displayed in magnanimity.

Endeavour to inspire them, fifthly, with a sincere affection and hearty good-will towards all mankind, without distinction of rank, of religion, of country, or of outward fortune. Teach them to regard all men as their brethren, the small as well as the great, the poor as well as the rich; to treat man as man, that is, as a rational and immortal creature, and his outward circumstances as accidental objects. Impress upon them deeply the natural equality of all men, that they may not be dazzled by the glare of power, of rank, or riches; that they may not be betrayed into meanness or obduracy, into pride or cruelty. Never allow

them to talk of mean, low, vulgar people and to accompany what they say with contemptuous looks and gestures. These expressions are culpable in the mouth of every sensible man; they are the offspring of error and vice: but in the mouth of a child or a youth, they are absolute folly and absurdity. If your children or your scholars are accustomed to use these expressions, then shew them, that the persons whom they term vulgar, low, mean people, possess far greater merit, and are far more important and useful members of the community, and consequently deserve more respect and honour than they; and that it is still very uncertain whether they themselves may not, by their own ill conduct, or even by unmerited misfortunes, be reduced to that same low class of people, and see themselves forced to seek compassion and relief from those whom they now, without foundation, think so vile. Watch carefully, in this respect, over their behaviour towards the servants. Think it no subject of connivance, if they treat them with scorn, with arrogance, speak to them in a haughty and imperative tone, and take upon them the hard and self-

conceited master, whom it is their duty implicitly to obey. Teach them on the contrary to acknowledge the value of the service the domestics administer to their weakness and inexperience, and to acknowledge it with thankfulness; inspire them with liberal and beneficent sentiments towards them; and if they dare to command them in your presence, then do you see that their commands are not executed.—Preserve them likewise in their earliest years, from that coldness, from that envy and malignity, which difference of nation and religion is but too apt to excite among mankind. Teach them, that it is not the apparel, not the outward manners and usages, not opinions, but character and conduct, that fix the true value of individuals; that instruction, education, and accident, have a great share in the opinions and the belief of the generality of mankind; that no one errs on purpose, or rejects the truth as truth; that more depends on doing, than on knowing; that man is not condemnable for error, but for vice; that every one should follow the dictates of his conscience, even though they should be erroneous; and that "there is no

respect of persons with God; but, that in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

At the same time neglect not to train them to compassion and beneficence. But would you frame their hearts to these virtues; represent them not only as very beautiful and noble, but teach them actually to know the various kinds of want and misery under which so many of their brethren sigh. Lead them at times into the sad but instructive abodes of the poor, the sick, and the dying. There let them form a comparison between their condition and that of so many others who have the same nature with them, and probably are more deserving than they. Let them see the famished looks and haggard figure, the hard couch and the hard bread, of the poor and needy, and hear their piteous moans. Keep them not away from such affecting sights, for fear of shocking their delicate nerves, or causing them painful sensations. These sensations are the glory of human nature. Rejoice and be glad when they appear in your children; let them give full scope to their pitying tears; conceal not from them your own;

and shew them by your example, that you are not ashamed of these honourable tears even at your manly age. But then share with them likewise the pleasure of beneficence and relief which you afford to the indigent and forlorn. Consult with them at times on the best means of administering comfort. Represent it to them as a peculiar honour you pay to their good behaviour, that you take them with you in this or that labour of christian love. Accustom them occasionally to curtail a little of their pleasures or accommodations, that they may the more effectually relieve those who are in want of the necessaries of life. Make them understand betimes that the beneficence which costs us nothing, or consists only in giving away what we could not use ourselves, what was totally superfluous and unnecessary to us, that this beneficence is of no great value, that it cannot be a virtue. Reward them therefore even for their beneficence, not by making them presents, but by partaking in the joy of the poor and the necessitous whom they have relieved, of the sick whom they have restored, of the sorrowful whom they have comforted, and by acquaint-

ing them with what fulness of heart they bless their benefactor.

Teach them, farther, to deny themselves, and to maintain the command over their sensual appetites. In this respect likewise combine practice with precept, and begin with both of them as early as possible. This is a matter of the utmost importance for creatures like us, who are partly sensual and partly rational. He who has not learnt in his early years to resist his sensual appetites, will find it extremely difficult in his riper age, if not absolutely impossible, to make those sacrifices to duty and virtue, which are so frequently demanded of us in the present state of discipline and probation. Therefore habituate your children, or those that are entrusted to your care and direction, willingly at times to deny themselves some innocent gratification, or to retire abruptly from the enjoyment of it, in order to prove the strength of their minds, and the mastery they have obtained over themselves. In this particular likewise precede them by your example. Appoint a time for certain pleasures or diversions, which you intend to enjoy in their company; enter

heartily into the sport with them; and then, if some duty or accidental circumstance, which you yourself however have perhaps previously planned, interrupt the enjoyment of these pleasures, or call you from them, shew them immediately, by your unruffled complacency, and by an affectionate admonition, how far you prefer your duty to all pleasures, and how much it behoves us to be able to bridle our desires and to govern ourselves. Request them on this occasion, to exercise themselves in these noble virtues, or at least to embrace this opportunity for giving you an unequivocal demonstration of their attachment; and reward those who do so the most readily with distinguished marks of esteem and friendship. If it at first appear difficult and irksome to them to do so much violence to themselves, if it even cost them great trouble to refrain from tears, and from breaking out in loud complaints; let not any ill-timed pity induce you to save them this trouble. The oftener they adopt this salutary practice, the easier it will become; and you will at length enable them to make the most costly sacrifices to virtue

and rectitude, without hesitation, whenever their duty demands it.

Train them finally to patience in sufferings, to fortitude and courage in misfortune, to a steady and intrepid behaviour in all situations. These qualities and virtues are indispensably necessary to us in our present state. He that has not learnt to suffer with calmness and resignation; he that allows himself to be shaken and put off his bias by every petty accident; he who shudders and recoils at every menace, at every appearance of danger; will never attain to any high degree of moral perfection, and his happiness is very liable to many and sudden reverses. Only the patient, the resolute, the intrepid, are capable of overcoming the difficulties that are occasionally met with on the path of duty and rectitude, of effectually stemming the torrent of prevailing depravity, and of preserving their innocence as well as their inward serenity in all the vicissitudes and temptations of outward fortune. To these virtues however we must be early trained; we must learn first to practise them in trivial matters, if we would do so afterwards in riper years and more important emergen-

cies. Therefore content not yourselves with recommending these manly, these noble virtues, to your children or your pupils, but exercise them in them on all occasions. Let not your fondness for them induce you by too great indulgence to spoil their taste, to spare them in every thing that is troublesome and unpleasant, and so to accustom them to softness and effeminacy. Inure them much rather to a hardy kind of life, so as that none of the accommodations of it may be so necessary to them, that they cannot be deprived of them without being wretched. Do they meet with any trifling mischance; are they obliged to suffer some hardship or pain; do they lose such things as they greatly value: increase not their sensibility to the event by the extravagant and anxious concern you take in it, by the lamentations you make on the occasion, by the extraordinary bustle in which you put yourself and all about you, to console them in their mishap, to compensate their loss, and instantaneously to remove their very tolerable pains. Give not to such things as are of no great consequence a greater importance in their eyes than they really have, by the man-

ner in which you view and treat them. Rather seek by your calmness to quiet them, and by your sedateness to inspire them with courage. Teach them to hold every object for what it actually is; discourse amicably with them on the nature of the affliction they suffer, of the pain they feel, of the loss they have sustained; shew them to how many disasters and calamities man is subject, and how much he may bear and suffer if he will. Quote to them examples of persons who have suffered far more than they, and were yet patient and resolute; and instead of terrifying them by calling their attention to all the possible bad effects of their present misfortune, teach them by degrees to observe the various uses a wise and virtuous man may draw even from the adversities that befal him. But give efficacy and vigour likewise to these doctrines by your own example. Bear the afflictions you meet with yourself with patience; let them never hear any murmurs and repinings at the divine dispensations proceed from your mouth; shew them by your own behaviour, that you can be tranquil under tribulations, and meet with composure and fortitude a danger which

you cannot avoid. Preserve them, lastly, as much as possible, from all impressions of fear and dread arising from such objects as only ignorance, or superstition, or melancholy, or slavish notions, have endued with a frightful and terrifick appearance. Shew them these objects whenever an opportunity occurs; make them acquainted with them, and lay before them in the liveliest colours the imbecility and misery of those who are always dreaming of dangers, and descrying objects of terror on every side.

These, pious hearers, are the principal virtues to which children and young people should be trained, and in which they should be constantly exercised. Would you, whom heaven has appointed to be parents, or preceptors, or teachers, resolutely and faithfully follow the rules I have here laid down, frequently and properly practise the discipline connected with them, and never be weary in implor, ing God for his blessing; then certainly your labours will not be in vain; they will sooner or later produce rich fruits of wisdom and virtue in the hearts and in the conduct of such as

are placed under your inspection and care.—Your children, your scholars, will be habituated to obedience and submission, to sincerity and the love of truth, to diligence, to industry and regularity in their affairs; they will be humble and modest, will love all men as their brethren, seek their satisfaction in doing good, govern themselves and resist the violence of their sensual appetites; they will learn even patience in afflictions, fortitude in adversity, and intrepidity in dangers. And how wise, how good, how happy must they be, in the delightful company of the fairest and noblest virtues! How much must these virtues exalt the lustre or supply the defect of outward distinctions! How will they conciliate the favour both of God and man; how beneficial will they be to their brethren! How much more calmly and contentedly will you leave them hereafter, knowing that they have these, and with them all the other virtues as the guides and companions of their lives.

SERMON V.

OF TRAINING UP CHILDREN TO RELIGION AND TO CHRISTIANITY.

GOD, from whom, through whom and to whom are all things, Creator, Benefactor, and Father of mankind, to know thee, to love thee, to obey thee, is our highest honour and our greatest happiness. This alone it is that confers upon us a real, and essential precedence over the inferiour creatures, which with us inhabit the earth. It is this alone that diffuses light and joy and hope and consolation over the dark and toilsome path of our terrestrial life. It is this alone that opens to our view such prospects in the future world, that makes us forget all the troubles of the present. Yes, O God, in knowing thee, we know the source and aggregate of whatever is great, whatever is good, whatever is beautiful and perfect. In loving thee, we love him, who unites in himself, whatever merits our veneration our gratitude, our affection, and

our confidence. In obeying thee, we obey the wisest, the most righteous, the kindest sovereign, whose laws tend solely to our good. Oh that we always perceived, always felt this truth, and always acted consistently with that perception and feeling; oh that we might always consider and employ religion, which alone confers this prerogative on our nature, and conducts us to those sources of wisdom and happiness, consistently with these views? Do thou assist us, O merciful father, to fulfil with ever greater exactitude our duty, which is at the same time our felicity. Teach us thyself, ever better to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, and let our knowledge be continually more fruitful in devout sentiments and good works. Let us do honour to the doctrine, which thou hast revealed to us, and which we confess with our mouths, by a virtuous and holy life, and grant particularly to those among us who are employed in the education of children, the grace to infuse into their hearts above all things the reverence and love of thee, and to train them up into sincere followers of thy son. Bless to this end the consid-

erations which are now to employ us, and hearken to our prayer for the sake of Jesus Christ our mediator and saviour, in whose name we farther address thee, saying: Our father, &c.

EPHES. vi. 4.

Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

THE most faithful observance of all the precepts and practices which we have been recommending to you, in several discourses on forming the minds and the hearts of children, will not be sufficient, pious hearers, for completing the grand design of a rational and christian education, unless it be connected with as exact and careful a training to religion and to christianity. No otherwise will these precepts and practices be truly useful and important. No otherwise will the understanding of the man be formed to true wisdom, and his heart to real, to the noblest virtue. No otherwise will he be capable of the supreme, of eternal happiness. "The fear of the Lord,"

says holy scripture, "that is wisdom; and," from the fear of the Lord, "to depart from evil, that is understanding." And in fact, my friends, without that clear and certain light which religion and christianity hold before us on the most important objects, without the powerful considerations by which they stimulate us to what is right and good, without the force which they communicate to us for discharging our duty, it would fare very ill with our wisdom and virtue. They would be like a building, resting if not upon sand, yet certainly on no solid foundation. We should be continually running the hazard of perplexing ourselves in our conclusions, and of being cheated and misguided by our senses, by our imagination, by our passions. But few, for I will grant every thing that can in this respect be granted, but few would be wise and virtuous; and even these few would not proceed so far either in wisdom or in virtue as a christian, who does honour to the appellation, may advance in both. Nothing then is of greater necessity than that children and young people should be introduced betimes and in the best manner to religion and christianity, if they

are to be rendered as wise, as good, as generally useful and as happy, as they are capable of becoming. This is likewise what the apostle Paul in our text inculcates upon fathers, or in general on parents, when he says: "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That is, form them into scholars of our lord Jesus Christ; instruct them in his doctrine, exercise them in obedience to his commands and in the imitation of his example; so bring them up, that they may become his true disciples and followers, that they may be sincere and enlightened christians.

My design at present, pious hearers, is to give you, by the divine assistance and blessing, some direction to this purpose; a direction the more necessary, as the generality of parents and preceptors are so negligent on this important article of education, and as the mistakes committed in it are the more various and common. Nobody denies that children and young people ought to be brought up to religion and to christianity, and that much depends upon it; but what is done for complying with this duty? They are first made to

learn by rote some, generally difficult and unintelligible forms of prayer; after this, a shorter or a longer system of church-doctrines, with some scripture commonplaces, for the most part very obscure; they are forced with much labour to imprint on their memory subjects which they do not at all understand, and thus not unfrequently these subjects are rendered disgusting and loathsome to them, who ought on the contrary to be taught to prize and to love them. Afterwards these subjects, which because they can talk upon they imagine themselves to understand, are expounded to them; and this is generally done in such a manner, that they are more convinced of their own dependency and subjection, than of the importance and excellencey of the matter of their instruction. In the mean time they are occasionally exhorted, usually between whiles and in much too general a manner, to fear God and to be good; by which is meant that they should habitually go to church, and bring home the text on which the preacher discoursed, or if called upon, be able to repeat some general heads of the sermon, without any farther concern whether they have

understood something of the discourse at large and applied it to their own instruction and improvement or not; and when they are of proper age for confirmation they are previously sent a few times to the minister of the parish, for some further instruction, and at length solemnly admitted into the congregation; and then it is thought that all has been done which christian parents can and ought to do, for bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But does it require much attention and sagacity to perceive the imperfection of such an initiation in religion and in christianity, and does not daily experience teach us, how insufficient all this is towards forming children and young people into real christians? No, to train up children and young people to religion and to christianity, implies not only to instruct, or cause them to be instructed, in the contents of this sacred doctrine, proportionably to their age and capacity, but likewise to make this doctrine and Jesus Christ who revealed it to us, respectable and amiable to them; to form t heir minds upon the model of his, and to endeav-

our to lead them to the observance of his precepts and the imitation of his example. This is what all parents and preceptors should propose to themselves as their ultimate aim, not only in the hours immediately set apart for instruction, but also in the whole of their intercourse with such as are under their care, and in their whole behaviour towards them, if they would properly comply with the apostolical injunction in the text. For promoting in some degree the attainment of this design, I shall collect together, under the five following heads, what is proper herein to be observed.

The first is this: Inspire your children or your scholars, from their earliest infancy, with a just prepossession in favour of the truth and importance of religion and christianity. I mean not to say, that they are to fear God and to be christians, from mere prepossession. No, they must examine the merits of religion and christianity for themselves, when they are arrived at the full use of their understanding, and be sure of their faith upon fixed principles. But since they live and are brought up among christians, much depends on the first impressions they receive of the nature of the

christian doctrine; and these impressions contribute greatly to render the investigations they shall hereafter enter upon easy or difficult to them. And who can blame parents or teachers, who have actually gone through these investigations themselves, and have in consequence become christians from thorough conviction, who have known and experienced the holiness, the comfort, the divinity of their religion; who can blame them, if they teach their children or their scholars also to study it on that side; nay, who would not charge them with inconsistency of conduct, if they neglected so to do? If I know that any thing tends to my improvement, to my comfort and happiness, it is impossible for me to represent it as an indifferent thing to the persons whose welfare I have at heart: I must necessarily give them advantageous ideas of it, if they are not yet in a condition to judge of it from their own sagacity and experience. Observe the same conduct then in regard to religion and christianity, you who are employed in the business of christian education. Your children, your scholars have a great opinion of your understanding, of your sagacity, of your

wisdom and prudence in the choice between good and evil. What they see you constantly esteem and love, will readily gain their esteem and affection. What they see you resolutely reject and abhor, will soon attract their contempt and abhorrence. What you treat with neglect as an indifferent thing, they will not be apt to pursue with solicitude and zeal. Oh would but parents and preceptors consider this, with how much more success would their labours be crowned! But what impressions, what ideas of christianity must your children, your scholars imbibe, if they cannot discover, either from your words or your works, that you consider it as an important, as the most important concern; if they seldom or never hear you speak of God, of Christ, of religion; if they hear you speak of them without seriousness, without complacency, or even with contempt; if they hear you make them your sport, or honour others with your approbation while they deride them; if they see how apt you are yourself, under every pretence of urgent affairs, to neglect both publick and domestick worship, and how glad you are when you have cast off these

duties as a burden; what can they, I say, conclude from such a conduct, but that religion is either an indifferent or a grievous and irksome business? And how little in general will all the remonstrances you afterwards adduce to reform their sentiments be able to effect, against the influence of your example? Would you then communicate to your children or your pupils a prepossession in behalf of the importance and truth of the christian religion; let them see that you yourself are assured of it. Be not ashamed to discourse with them, or in their presence with others, concerning God and divine concerns. But this is never to be done without gravity, without reverence, without tokens of inward satisfaction. Testify your displeasure, your abhorrence at every thing that militates with these sentiments. Haste with joy to the place where the worshippers of God assemble in his service. Let it appear how much you are distressed when any thing happens to prevent you from it. See that it be no small matter that hinders you from the celebration of private worship; perform it in company with

your children, as soon as they are capable of any attention; and do it so as that they may see that you reckon this kind of employment and recreation far more momentous and noble than any other. This will not fail to make salutary impressions on your children or your scholars; and it will be impossible for them afterwards to treat with levity, or to reject without the strictest examination a matter which they have always seen you revere as something so important and so holy.

A second rule in close connection with the former, is this: Teach them from their tenderest years of youth to conceive of religion as the best and surest means for becoming virtuous and happy; and do this not so much by argument as by your own example. Shew them on one hand by your wise, moderate, upright, beneficent, christian behavour, how much religion is calculated to form its votaries into good, pious, useful men, citizens, heads of families, friends. To this end tell them occasionally how hard it would be for you to do or to omit this or that; to refuse such an advantage, to take upon you such an incumbrance, to withstand this temptation to

evil, or to conquer that difficulty in doing good; did not religion by its doctrines and promises, give you inclination and ability to it; unless you had before you the precepts and the example of your saviour, who has deserved so much of you and of the whole human race; unless you considered yourself as a being designed for another and a better life; and how easy these views and expectations render it to you now, even to follow the dictates of your conscience and to fulfil your duty, when neither can be done without denying yourself many temporal advantages. Shew them however likewise on the other hand, by a steady and cheerful behavour, by the constant serenity of your mind, by the stability of your trust in God, by your patience in afflictions, by your contentedness under disappointments, how consolatory religion is, and how happy it renders mankind. Take your opportunity for this principally in cases when you are most in need of its comfort and assistance, and most happily experience them. Converse with your children, with your pupils, on these occurrences, and shew them what a blessed influence religion has on your

repose. This is certainly an excellent means of making religion venerable and amiable to them. Were you, for example, when you have been calumniated, when you have been severely and unjustly blamed, when your best actions have been imputed to bad designs, and instead of the well-earnt praise you expected, you are punished with scorn; were you to shew yourself calm and unruffled in the midst of your family, from the approving testimony of your conscience, and under the persuasion that God knows your intentions and accepts your conduct; your children would learn to look more at the judgment of their reason than at the judgment of the world, and to prefer a good conscience and the approbation of God, to all the applauses and panegyrics of mortals. Are your honest plans defeated, is your industry unrequited, your prudence frustrated, your hopes annihilated; let the contentedness and cheerfulness which you still retain, be a lesson to your children, of the force of religion upon your mind. Say to them: I have done my duty, I have done it with all possible exactitude, I have been wanting in nothing that depended on me for reaching my good design;

but I had no certainty that I should attain it. I know that all depends on God, and is directed by him. Now I see that my views were not his views; but I am assured that his views are always good, always the best. At present indeed, I cannot perceive it; probably hereafter by experience I may. I was an instrument in his hand; I have acted according to his will as far as I knew it. Upon the whole, it must however be attended by good effects, though they be not exactly such as I expected from it. Probably I have been sowing seed that will only begin to shoot upward after some years are elapsed, and bear fruit when I am no longer here. Were you on these and the like occasions thus to exhibit yourselves to your children, your scholars, and by such discourses and examples, render sensible to them as it were the efficacy of the doctrine you confess; a religion productive of such effects, which keeps its confessors so satisfied and cheerful in such circumstances, must necessarily gain their affection and esteem, and they will at all times seek refreshment and comfort there, where they know that you have so often and so copiously found it.

Their hearts once thus prepared to hearken to the voice of truth and virtue, the particular instruction you shall give them from the doctrines of religion will far more happily succeed; only it must be conducted in a manner adapted to the nature of the subject and the capacity of the scholar. I will comprise the most material points that are to be attended to, in the third rule or observation. It is this: In instructing your children concerning religion, be sure not to begin with the most difficult and sublime mysteries of it. This is not only to labour in vain, but may even do much mischief. It is in vain to attempt it, because these doctrines, even in reference to what may be comprehended and explained, are far too lofty for the apprehension of a child, or the first years of youth. Is it not an idle employment to communicate words to children, to which they can no more annex ideas than if they were borrowed from a foreign language? It is however not only idle, but likewise hurtful to do so. The children thus accustom themselves to be satisfied with words instead of things, and to mistake a readiness in pronouncing particular terms and phrases in a

certain connexion, for actual knowledge and science; and this in a hundred other instances, must effectually foreclose to them the way that leads to truth. This is not all. That inadequate procedure must necessarily relax the eagerness of their desire for acquiring a knowledge of religion; because nothing but the pleasure of satisfying the curiosity can uphold this eagerness of desire. This pleasure, however, and this gratification of the curiosity, must absolutely fall to the ground, and give place to disgust and aversion, by forcing us to admit and retain what we absolutely cannot understand. Nay how easily may this wrong method of teaching beget doubt and unbelief with increasing years! How easily may religion become suspected by the youth who is beginning to reflect upon it, on beholding it in so gloomy a garb, on finding in his memory more incomprehensible words and expressions than clear or perspicuous ideas! Would you avert these perils from him; make the doctrine concerning the mysteries of religion the last part of your instruction. In the mean time the scholar will learn to reflect upon himself, will study himself, and

presently discover unfathomable depths in the nature and connexion of his soul and his life. He will in the mean time acquire some knowledge of the energies and operations of nature, and presently experience how impenetrable the darkness is in which it is involved. In short, he will find mystery enough in objects the reality whereof he cannot deny. And then it will make no repugnant impression upon him, when he perceives that religion, and particularly divine revelation contains doctrines that have their dark side, and whereof we can acquire but a very imperfect knowledge.

Begin therefore your instruction with what is most easy and suited to the apprehension of a child or a youth. Make them first attentive to their manifold wants and to the means of supplying them which nature and social life have put into our hands. Help them to remark and to distinguish their feelings, their appetites and affections; teach them to compare them with external objects, and with the feelings, the appetites and affections of other people; bring them to the knowledge of their dependent and feeble condition, and the con-

nexions in which they stand with external objects, and thence deduce the principal duties of morality which relate to themselves and to their neighbour. Make it comprehensible to them by example; and let their own heart pronounce upon what is right and wrong, and proper and improper. Shew them farther the most affecting beauties of nature. Teach them to understand the properties and ends of the principal creatures; endeavour to give them some conceptions of order, of art, of wisdom; display as it were before their eyes, the riches discovered by mankind here on earth for their nourishment, their accommodation, their pleasure; rejoice in it with them; and then tell them, without any formal and learned demonstration, that there is an invisible being, a deity, who produced and preserves all these beauties and benefits. They will immediately be sensible to this truth. It is grounded in the wants of our understanding and our heart, and both of them will always revolt against any objection that may be brought against it, if they be not entirely spoiled. Represent this deity to them, not as an austere master and inexorable judge; but as a father, who loves and

provides for all his creatures, who is continually shewing them more kindness than the tenderest parents shew their children; who, however, entertains not a blind affection for them, but requires of them a cheerful obedience for their own advantage, and whose favour is no otherwise to be obtained than by doing what is right and proper. Inform them at the same time, by recurring to their own feelings, wherein they are beholden to this deity. Say to them, for instance, at times: I perceive that thou lovest me, my dear child; for thou knowest the greatness of my love to thee, and how earnestly I interest myself in thy welfare. Shouldst thou not then much rather love our common Father in heaven, whose kind providence sustains both thee and me? From him alone have I the means and the desire to do thee good. Thou thinkest it thy duty to acknowledge my benefits with gratitude. Out of gratitude thou endeavourest to render thyself agreeable to me. Thou neglectest many things because thou knowest they would displease me. Thou dost many others, because thou art assured that I have a pleasure in them. Shouldst thou not then in like manner

behave thyself towards him from whom all things proceed, and without whom thou and I should not be at all? In this manner you will convince your children or your scholars, very easily of the justice and reasonableness of our principal duties towards God, and may enable them early in life to fulfil them. Then give them to understand, that heretofore mankind most shamefully abused all the bounties of this God, that they entirely lost sight both of him and their duties; but that this God, instead of punishing and exterminating them from the earth, sent Jesus Christ to them as his ambassador, to instruct them in what they did not know, and to furnish them again with means of escaping the punishment they deserved, and of becoming wise, good, and happy. Represent to them the virtues of the redeemer in their brightest colours; deeply imprint the image of his moral excellence upon their souls; tell them how holy and beneficent a life he led, how much mankind are indebted to him, how perfect and happy he will render them even after their death, if they obey his laws and follow his example; what an exceeding complacency God had in what

Christ did for us, and what complacency he will also have in us, if we do our utmost, in our station and calling, to shew the same persevering integrity and faithfulness which our saviour testified in the prosecution of the work that was given him to do. Lead them by this method to the doctrine of immortality and of the future life, which you will naturally represent to them as affording to mankind the the only solid consolation in distress, as the surest foundation of their hopes. Give them to see their conduct in this world as the groundwork of their portion in the other, and accustom them so to regard, to esteem, and to use the present, as its connexion with the future demands. Your instruction being conducted in this or some similar manner, will contain nothing that is not on a level with the capacity of a child or a youth, which will not agreeably employ his understanding and affect his heart; nothing that does not coincide with his own feelings, and which he may not apply in various instances to his daily behaviour; and thus will religion be important, venerable, and amiable to him. And if this be the case, it will strike deep root in his heart,

and resist every attack of misfortune and cavil; it will bring forth the fairest fruit in his heart and life, and render him truly wise and happy.

Yet more successfully to promote this design, pious hearers, endeavour, fourthly, to awaken and continually keep up in your children a lively sense of their entire dependence upon God, upon his will, upon his providence. This is the principal ground of all real godliness, the best preservative against iniquity, the strongest incitement to goodness, the richest source of peace. Happy they, who have been accustomed, from their earliest youth, to consider all things in their dependence on the supreme being, to have regard to God in all things, and to give such a direction to their heart as that on all occasions it naturally, without compulsion or violence, nay with pleasure and delight, lifts itself to him in whom we live and are. How many temptations to sin will such an one without trouble overcome, which would have overcome him in a contrary disposition of mind! How many peaceful and pleasant hours will he enjoy in such circumstances, wherein others, who live remote from God, are excruciated by anxious cares

and sorrows! Oh strive to procure your children, your pupils, these advantages, this happiness, you who have the management of their education! Direct their view, in all the events that befall themselves and others, to God, from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things. Teach them to recognize and to revere his supreme control, his wisdom and goodness, as well in small things as in great. Guard them from that error which is so detrimental to our virtue and piety no less than to our comfort and satisfaction, and which, though it do not indeed entirely dissolve our ties with the first and best of beings, yet relaxes them to an extreme degree; namely, that God only regards the whole and not the various parts of which it is composed; that he does not take cognizance of every one of his creatures in particular, and provide for it; that he governs merely by universal laws, and never has any peculiar influence on our actions or the events of our lives. Tell them, whenever any thing agreeable happens to them, and they are rejoicing in it: It is God, our common parent, who causes these advantages to reach thy dwelling, who by giving

thee this cause of joy, affords thee a fresh testimony of his parental care and affection. Oh adore this gracious being, thank him for his unremitted goodness; and beware of forgetting so great a benefactor, or of refusing him the obedience so justly his due. And likewise say, when any thing adverse befalls them; when fear or sorrow invades their heart; Even this affliction, this disappointment, this danger is dependent on the will of him who rules and governs all things both in heaven and on earth, who also knows and loves thee. Submit thyself to his will; it is at all times right and proper. He knows how best to guide thee to wisdom, to virtue, to happiness. Honour him with steadfast confidence; resign to him thy conduct; the end of it will certainly be salvation and blessing, glory and joy. Thus, my friends, will you bring up your children or your scholars to real devotion of heart. Thus will you best preserve them from indifference and levity in regard to religion. Thus will you habituate them, in the language of the scripture, to walk in the presence of God, to have the Lord always before them; and then will they, as the psalmist

says, never be moved; i. e. they will allow nothing to turn them aside from the road of duty and virtue, and even in the midst of tribulations and dangers will be calm and undismayed.

I have here a short remark to make, particularly relative to prayer, which undoubtedly is an excellent means for cherishing in us the sentiment of our dependence upon God. Very little children are not capable of this exercise of piety and devotion; and if we accustom them to it, before they can have the slightest conception of a superiour being, we accustom them to pray without the understanding, and to consider the whole transaction as a matter of mere ceremony. Beware however even when their intelligence and their reflection begin to appear, when they make the first steps towards the idea of a universal father of mankind, an invisible and powerful benefactor, when they already know something of Jesus Christ, as the greatest friend of man; even then, I say, take care not to teach them either long or difficult prayers; not to keep them at this exercise by compulsion, nor to punish the neglect of it by severe correction.

Only go before them at times by your own example; take advantage of the moments when they are in the most serene and cheerful mood, when they are disposed to seriousness and reflection, or when they are strongly affected by particular incidents; represent prayer to them as the glory and happiness of mankind; accustom them early, but without constraint, to express their thoughts and feelings briefly and simply in their own words; teach them to attend to the good which they daily enjoy, to their wants and defects, to the faults they commit, and to make these observations the subject of their prayer: thus will they gradually become rational petitioners, and have a relish for this sacred practice. And never imagine that it is beyond the reach of children to pray without forms prescribed and got by rote. Nothing more is necessary, than that you give them at times such suggestions as are adapted to their age and comprehension. Ask them, for instance, in the morning, when they are about to pray, whether they are not glad that they are still alive and in health; whether they do not wish likewise to be preserved all the day long from ev-

ery accident; whether they have not a desire to learn and to do some good to-day, and to behave themselves as obedient children and scholars towards their parents and preceptors, &c. and then teach them to turn their thoughts and feelings into a short prayer in some such manner as this: I rejoice, my dear heavenly father, that I am still alive and in health. I thank thee for my life and for my health. Continue thy watchful providence over me this day, to guard me from every thing that may be hurtful to me. Grant that I may neither speak nor do any ill, that I may readily obey my parents and instructers, faithfully discharge my duty, and so become more intelligent and good from day to day, that thou mayst have a gracious complacency in me, &c.—Avoid the too common practice of making them repeat the Lord's prayer daily, and probably more than once: it is in general too difficult for them to comprehend; and by this daily repetition, they will infallibly often, very often, repeat it without attention and without devotion.

Finally, my friends, endeavour to instruct your children or your scholars betimes in the

true end and design of religion and of christianity. Imprint it deeply on them, that the christian doctrine is a practical doctrine, a doctrine of truth unto godliness; that it is not instituted merely to gratify our curiosity, and to store our minds with various kinds of knowledge which we could not otherwise have acquired, or not without great labour and pains; but by means of this knowledge to improve and to tranquilize our heart, and to regulate our conduct accordingly. Tell and shew them that it relates more to doing than to knowing, more to living than to believing, and that the best christian is not he who knows the most, who can deliver the doctrines of christianity in the most perspicuous and just method, but he whose mind and conduct is in the completest harmony with the mind and conduct of Jesus Christ, the founder of our religion; who has made the greatest progress in humility, in gentleness, in the love of God and of mankind, in beneficence, in patience, in self-denial and contempt of the world; and that such a christian mind, such a holy life, are the best means of rendering christianity respectable to its scorners

and foes. Guard them betimes against that deplorable rage for damning and cursing, which is continually gaining ground in the christian world, by teaching them that all they who confess Christ for their lord, adopt his doctrine and obediently keep his commandments, are of the number of his followers, however they may differ from one another otherwise in rites and opinions. Remind them continually of the express declarations of Christ and his apostles: "Obedience is better than sacrifice; he that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me; ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you; circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God; in Christ Jesus only that faith availeth which worketh by love; faith without works is dead." To this end always represent religion to them on the practical side; and account nothing as a part of it which can neither contribute to our improvement nor our quiet. Shew them what influence every doctrine, every precept of religion should naturally have on our sentiments and behaviour; what comfort its promises should

give us in all the events of life; and remind them of these things on all occasions. Assist them in making the application of them to the particular circumstances in which they are at the time. Would you for example, subdue the pride of their hearts; ask them, whether this is reconcileable with the temper of Christ, and hold up to them the pattern of his condescension and meekness. Do they find it difficult to suppress their resentments; inculcate upon them how much the degrading passion of revenge is in opposition to the christian character and calling, and how directly opposite it is to every thing that christianity teaches and enjoins. Are they addicted to impetuous transports of anger and wrath; refer them to the mild and patient Jesus, and teach them to their confusion and amendment to compare the injuries that he bore with those which they have received. Accustom them in general to keep the example of Christ continually before their eyes, and to interrogate themselves frequently: What would my saviour have determined on, what would he have done, how would we have behaved, had he been in my situation? How would he have

regarded this or that matter; what sort of judgment would he have passed upon it? What impression would the flatteries with which I am loaded, or the scorn with which I am treated, have made upon him? This, my friends, this alone is real christianity; and if you train up your children or your scholars, to such a frame of mind, to such a conduct, you "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," you make them christians indeed, you qualify them for becoming capable of an eminent degree of perfection and happiness both in the present and in the future world.

What a joyful prospect for parents who love their children, for preceptors and teachers, who are convinced of the dignity of their office, and the sacredness of their duties! What labour will not be easy and pleasant to them, while they are indulging the hope of reaching this aim! What an honour to form upright and faithful disciples for Christ our beloved redeemer, and thus to enlarge the borders of his kingdom! What a considerable benefit both to the present and the future generations of mankind! And what a ravishing delight,

what an inexpressible recompense will it hereafter be to those parents, to those preceptors and teachers, when they rejoin their children, or those who are intrusted to their care, in the celestial abodes, when they shall there receive their thanks for the fidelity werewith they discharged their trust, and hear from one or more of the blessed: All hail to thee, for thou hast delivered my soul; thou hast kept mine eyes from tears and my feet from falling! O God, what happiness can be equal to that of the deliverer of a human soul!

SERMON VI.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RULES CONCERNING EDUCATION.

O God, though thou hast in thy wisdom assigned us this earth as our abode only for a short time, and set narrow limits to our terrestrial life; yet how important is our destination in it! How much in this short, precarious time have we to do, and how much depends, in regard to all our future fortunes, on the method in which we do it! We live in a state of discipline and probation, and according to our behaviour in it will the state of retribution that awaits us be regulated. Thou wouldst that in this state of preparation we should make the best, the most generally beneficial use of our capacities and talents, of our faclties and possessions, and thus not only promote our own perfection and happiness, but also the perfection and happiness of our fellow-creatures according to our several abilities. Thou hast connected us together by various

ties, in the intention that we should care for each other and mutually labour at our temporal and eternal welfare. This duty thou hast particularly imposed on parents, guardians, and tutors, in regard to their children or their pupils. Thou hast intrusted to them the formation and nurture of rational, immortal souls, which are precious in thy sight, and wilt call them to account for it hereafter. Oh then grant them thoroughly to perceive the importance of this duty; cause them often to ruminate on the consequences of their conduct in this particular and of thy judgment; and let this sentiment inflame them with an ardent zeal, to do as carefully, as conscientiously and faithfully as possible what thou hast enjoined them to do. Assist them also happily to overcome all the difficulties which they meet with in it; refresh them with the encouraging prospect of the good success of their exertions, and enable both themselves and those committed to their charge to be continually making farther progress, on the way of wisdom, of christian virtue, and of real happiness. Bless to the promotion of these designs the salutary lessons now to be delivered, and grant, that

we may not simply conceive and confess them to be salutary, but may actually regulate our deportment by them. We pray thee for all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our saviour, who has taught us in this manner to address thee: Our father, &c.

EPHES. vi. 4.

Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

SOME time ago we delivered to you, in several discourses, instructions relating to rational and christian education. We pointed out to you, pious hearers, how the understanding of children is to be cultivated; how their heart is to be allured to the love of goodness; how they are particularly to be trained to the primary virtues; and how they are most successfully to be brought up to religion and to christianity. These particulars we endeavoured to lay before you, in their natural connexion, as completely as we could without running into a prolixity that would have been unfavourable to attention. This field however is so fertile in profitable consid-

erations, that we have resolved to give it still a little gleaning ere we finally take leave of it; and to this purpose we have in the fear of the Lord devoted the present moments.

We shall therefore deliver to you a few general rules and observations on education, which may at once tend to facilitate to you the observance of the precepts already propounded, and encourage you in the steady and faithful discharge of this trust. It will at the same time afford us an opportunity of extending and farther illustrating several of the reflections and propositions which in the foregoing treatises could only be cursorily noticed; and I hope you will readily grant me your attention once more to a subject in all respects of so great importance. There are five or six principal rules and observations which I intend this morning to press upon you.

The first is this. Frequently consider what species of creatures they are in the education and formation whereof you are employed. You are not to consider them either as merely animal or as merely rational creatures. On the scale of being man stands between the

brute and the angel. He is neither to be degraded to the former, nor elevated to the latter. But in him sensuality and reason are to be brought into agreement, and to act with one accord at the attainment of the same object. If then you set no bounds to the sensual appetites of your children; if you allow them peremptorily to judge of the value of outward things by the impressions they make on their senses; if you train them to obedience and duty entirely by sensual pleasure or displeasure; if you govern them only in an arbitrary, a despotick manner; you then forget the dignity of their nature, and in all probability they will never rise in their sentiments and affections far above the irrational creation. If on the other hand you require of them in their juvenile years the gravity and sedateness of an aged philosopher; if you impute to them every defect of consideration and reflection as a crime; if you expect them constantly to act upon the most accurate principles; if you forbid them every innocent puerile diversion, and endeavour to render them at once insensible to every thing that acts upon their senses in an agreeable or a

disagreeable manner; if you continually exercise them in the severest self-denial: you forget the infirmity of their present state, you forget that they are human creatures, whose glory consists not in insensibility or the extirpation of their sensual appetites; but in the gradually acquired mastery over them. Avoid both these extremes with equal care, pious hearers, if you would qualify your children for reaching the design of their being. Teach them neither fondly to pamper and effeminate their body, nor unnecessarily to mortify and torment it. Teach them to respect and provide for it as an essential part of man, but never to treat it as the most important part. Let them enjoy in playful mirth the beauties of nature, the recreations of social life, the pleasure of moderate exercise and liberty, and all the harmless joys of their unthinking age; let them likewise, for their future caution, feel the pain brought on by accident or their own imprudence; strive not vainly to eradicate their natural appetites for pleasure, for applause, for honour, for quiet and independence; but strive to temper them wisely, and by degrees to direct them to the worthiest

kinds of pleasure, of applause, of honour, of quiet and independence. Teach them by their own experience and that of others, to distinguish appearance from reality, and to connect the present with the future. Cultivate their understanding in proportion as their senses grow more active, and become more susceptible of lively impressions; let dissipation and reflection, recreation and labour, gaiety and seriousness, take place of each other in due rotation; and frequently give occasion to such actions of virtue and beneficence as may draw forth the whole sensibility of their heart in generous emotions. Thus will you treat them as creatures partly sensual and partly rational; and thus will you ever be bringing them nearer to the true destination of man, whose reason is not given him for extirpating his sensual appetites and instincts, but to regulate and govern them.

Another leading rule in education is this: Endeavour by the properest means to keep up a becoming deference and respect for yourself in your children. Upon this uncommonly much depends, particularly in the first years of education; indeed I may say, every

thing depends upon it. If your children are to be rendered wise and virtuous, they must in their early years take many important maxims on your bare word, and on that authority alone believe them to be true; because, though they may in some measure comprehend them, yet the reason of them and their connexion with other propositions, they cannot yet perceive. They must learn to observe many duties, and to habituate themselves to many virtues, the influence whereof upon their present and future well-being, and the well-being of society, cannot as yet be made sufficiently plain and luminous to them. They must have somebody on whose decision they can safely rely, to regulate their own judgment on the various and so often contradictory judgments which they hear passed by others on the good or ill qualities of things, or on the value of certain actions, and which they know not how to reconcile. They must in short learn to obey, and frequently from obedience alone resist their inclinations and abstain from pleasure. But can this be brought about, so as to be really beneficial to their understanding and their heart, unless

you are greatly respected by them, and are able constantly to maintain this respect? Few parents and preceptors however entertain any doubt concerning the necessity of this particular, all having self-love enough to be desirous of respect and authority, and no one being willing to part with the command he has, or thinks he has over another. But the way in which this respect is acquired and maintained is not always the best; it is often faulty in a high degree; and a building that is raised on a bad foundation may easily be shaken, it may be demolished by any trifling accident. If you found your respect merely on authority and force; if you endeavour constantly, or at least usually, to support it by a scowling brow, by harsh expressions, by arbitrary commands, by severe chastisements, by an imperious, sullen, arrogant behaviour; if you absolutely require on all occasions implicit obedience; if you punish every the slightest infringement of it with inflexible severity, however various the cause and effects of it may be: you will indeed spread fear and terror around you; your children, your scholars, will feel the weight of your authority, and will

stand in awe of the disagreeable consequences of your displeasure; but you will make slaves of them, impatiently submitting to the yoke you lay upon their necks, and ready to cast it off whenever they think they may do it with impunity. If you would build this deference, this respect on a firm and lasting foundation; see that your children, your scholars, acquire a good opinion of you, that they have high notions of your understanding and of your integrity, that they even reckon you wise and virtuous, and by wisdom and virtue happy, and that they have not the least doubt of your aiming at their good. For infusing into them these good opinions of you, it is not necessary that you praise yourself, or commend to them the eminent qualities of your mind and heart and the propriety of your behaviour, in words; but it would be well if another should do so at times with discretion and in a natural and easy manner in their presence. Let them only not see any thing foolish, unbecoming, inconsistent, much less bad and vicious in your discourses and actions, do but follow the dictates of wisdom and virtue yourself at all times and in all respects, and as much as

possible with a cheerful countenance, on which no trace of conflict with yourself, or any inward repugnance to the suggestions of conscience and duty appear. Consider your children as attentive witnesses and severe judges of your conduct; and rather fly from them with all speed, when you have reason to fear, lest any disorderly passion should get the better of you, or you should be put out of temper in any way shocking and offensive to them. Never pronounce on any subject without sufficient knowledge of its merits, that you may not be reduced to the necessity of reserving your judgment. Never act without good reasons, that you may not be ashamed of your actions, and may safely repeat them on similar occasions. Carefully conceal your own faults and infirmities from them, till their reason be strong enough to venerate the voice of truth and the injunctions of virtue for themselves, and without reference to him who inculcates upon them the doctrines of truth, and sets before them the obligations of virtue. Let them, in short, perceive how much they have their welfare at heart, how tenderly you love them. Rejoice with

them in all the good that happens to them, and think it no disgrace to take part with them at times in their innocent amusements. Such a wise, virtuous, amiable, and prudent demeanour as this will infallibly give them the best opinion of you; and this opinion, supported by filial gratitude and affection, will shield them on most occasions from every seduction to error and vice. The reverence they have for you will be solid and permanent; it will add force and energy to all your remonstrances, your assertions, your precepts and commands; it will prevent all pernicious doubt of the justice, the truth, the legitimacy and the reasonableness of them; it will render the docility and obedience of your children or your pupils, no less cheerful than sincere, and even abundantly alleviate to yourself the discharge of your duty.

A third principal rule in bringing up children is this: In the education of your children, follow some particular plan, or certain fixt principles and rules, adopted on mature deliberation, and inflexibly adhere to them as far as is possible. Since in the first periods of education, as I have already more than

once observed, far more depends on constant exercise in duty and on the acquisition of good habits, than on formal instruction; so a strict uniformity must necessarily be observed, if you would have that exercise to grow into aptitude, and these good habits become natural and efficacious. The neglect of this rule is one of the principal causes of the poor effects of much otherwise laudable pains, employed to this purpose. If the chief persons engaged in the tuition of a child disagree in their sentiments, opinions, purposes, and principles, and this disagreement be manifested in the presence of the child, or end in altercation and contention; or if even the same person, for want of settled principles, proceeds sometimes one way and sometimes another, blames and punishes to-day that which he yesterday praised and rewarded, orders to-day what he yesterday forbad, uses to-day an immoderate severity and to-morrow an excessive relaxation and indulgence; the purposes of education can never be attained. The judgment of the child will be always dubious and wavering; his inclinations and views always remain unsettled and contradictory;

and the good confidence he naturally has in his parents and tutors must ever be growing weaker, and at length totally fail. And how can I give his faculties a certain direction, to ease him in the application of them, if he be forced to apply them so often to opposite and conflicting matters? How can I make his duty agreeable and virtue amiable to him, if he has one moment reproof, at another praise, now reward, now correction to expect from it? Beware of these too common faults, you that are entrusted with the business of education. Consult frequently with each other upon it, ye fathers and mothers; consult likewise upon it with all the persons who may have any share in the education of your children, or a remarkable influence on their manners. Impart to each other your observations and experiences; agree upon certain fixt principles and rules of conduct, to be observed among you, and follow them with invariable precision. Be not inconsistent; contradict not each other; much rather concur in mutual support; build upon the same foundation; work by the same plan; constantly go hand in hand; and be assured, that such

uniform and harmonious endeavours, though they should even be erroneous in some respects, will bring to effect far more than others, which though better in themselves, are yet subject to many alterations and many contradictions.

Fourthly, be firm and unwearied in the prosecution of your well-concerted plan, and let neither difficulties nor ill success divert you from it. Flatter not yourself with the hopes of completely attaining your beneficent aim in the compass of a few months or years. Expect not that every good seed you cast into the ground shall immediately sprout upwards, and bear fruit at your appointed time. It may frequently lie long buried in the earth, it may seem totally dead, and yet at length continued culture, or some unexpected favourable circumstance, shall restore it to life, and reward your patience with the hopes of a blessed harvest. Many lessons of wisdom must be repeated a hundred times, before the teacher shall be able to deliver them in a way suited to the apprehension of his scholar. Many a bad habit, many a perverse trick, must be attacked a hundred times in vain,

ere it abates of its force, and gives way to practice and habits of a contrary cast. Many a virtue must be as oft recommended without effect, till at length it appears in its full light, and presents itself to the child or the youth, in the form that moves his heart so as to gain his esteem and love. Intelligence and sensibility are frequently very late in their appearance, and then shew themselves at once in so much vigour, as more than compensates for all the previous attempts that were ineffectually made to call them forth. Wisdom and virtue and the fear of God, are advantages not to be produced at once and without pains; they are potentates that must long dispute the field with folly and vice before they can get the command of our hearts. Seize every opportunity to assist them in this conquest: never be weary of combating the enemy till he is tired out with your opposition, always remembering, that the years of childhood and early youth are only adapted to sowing and not to reaping. Let the unsuccessful effects of your exertions make you continually more attentive to yourself, to your pupils, and to every the least external circum-

stance; but let them not render you dispirited. Look for the cause of it rather in your own wrong method of proceeding, than in the impossibility of meeting with success; and let not your vanity prevent you from correcting these errors as soon as you discover them; so, however, as that this alteration in your method be not very conspicuous, lest it should weaken the confidence your pupils have in you. Call yourself frequently to account for the diligence and fidelity you exert in this employment; converse upon it with your friends, and avail yourself of their sagacity and experience; and if still, with the good testimony of your conscience, you fail of your aims, or but very imperfectly reach them, you must comfort yourself with the reflection, that you have strained every nerve to do all you could with the means and faculties granted you by God, and that under the government of a wise and gracious providence even those honest endeavours, whereof we do not discern the success, cannot be absolutely lost.

That you may not be disheartened in this employment, frequently call to mind, fifthly, the manifold and great advantages you may

derive to yourself in regard to your moral character or your intrinsick perfection from a rational and christian care of education. As long as we live upon earth, my friends, so long do we live in a state of exercise and discipline. We are all to be educated to a better life, to a superior happiness; and this education ceases not till death. Here we can never say, that we are as wise, as good, as virtuous, as we may be and become; and woe to them who think, at any period of their lives, that they have reached that mark, and take no more pains to strive at a higher perfection! Soon will they lose even the ground they have gained, and find themselves again at the entrance of the course which they had half completed. Parents, teachers, guardians, if you love yourselves, and are desirous of corresponding with your situation, let the business of education which is your bounden duty, even in this respect, be of the utmost importance to you. It is an excellent means for the advancement of your own perfection. While you labour with earnestness and assiduity in forming the minds and the hearts of your children or your pupils, you are at the same time pro-

euring new advantages to your own; while you are endeavouring to make others wise, you are continually becoming wiser yourselves; while you are labouring to improve them, your own improvement is always advancing. The faults you observe in them will make you more attentive to your own, will shew you them in all their alarming consequences, and fill you with abhorrence at the sight. The disorderly appetites and passions, which you are endeavouring to moderate and abate in them, will render you vigilant to every attack of these foes to your happiness and peace, and always supply you with weapons against them. The very dread you must always be under, lest you say or do something in the presence of your children that may make ill impressions upon them, will preserve you from many a trip; it will lay you under a wholesome restraint, and at length make the practice of the most arduous virtues habitual to you. What you now do only from necessity and prudence or from affection for your children and scholars, you will do in time from inclination and principle, from love to God and a delight in virtue.

Besides, you will find a thousand opportunities for acquiring more knowledge of the human heart, and particularly of your own; for detecting its secret wiles and its dishonest views; for applying the precepts of wisdom and virtue more successfully to yourself; and by numberless exercises and maxims of prudence, rendering your duty continually more easy and pleasant. What advantages, my friends! Can we ever too dearly buy them? Shall we have any reason to say, even when our endeavours have not prospered to the extent of our wishes in regard of others, that we have spent our strength in vain, since it is apparent that so much at least accrues from it to our personal advantage.

Lastly, often rouse yourself to diligence in the business of education by lively ideas of the importance of it. Above all things let your own experience inform you of the great influence a good or bad education has on all the future years of life. If you have yourself enjoyed a good education; frequently call to mind how much you are beholden to it; from how many faults and excesses it has preserved you; what numberless times you have

felt the force of the good principles you received from your parents or teachers, to your profit and delight; how much it has facilitated the discharge of your duties, that you were accustomed to them betimes, and that you were taught to combine them with the idea of pleasure; how far you are advanced in this or the other rare and difficult virtue, because you were exercised in it before you became acquainted with vice; how many alleviations and comforts you have found in adverse circumstances and in the hour of distress, because you were taught rightly to judge of the value of things and to prize and apply the consolations of religion; and then ask yourself whether you do not wish your children the same advantages, and whether you shall not make yourself the most just and cutting reproaches, if by your fault they are forced to forego them? On the contrary, have you had a bad or even no very good education; frequently call to mind the mischiefs that have thence arisen to you, and which probably still arise. Say often to yourself, are not the faults I still most frequently commit, and which I find the most difficult to resist, the faults which

were the least opposed in my childhood and earliest youth, or treated as indifferent things by those who had the care of my education? Are not the unruly passions which still the most frequently carry me away and most destroy my repose and happiness, the very same which were most indulged in my childhood and earliest youth, or even flattered and encouraged? Are not the precepts of wisdom and duty, to the observance of which Iam even now obliged to use effort, the very same that I formerly could transgress and actually did transgress without scruple and without alarm, because I saw them transgressed without reluctance by those under whose care I was placed? Are not the virtues which now cost me most pains and conflict and self-denial to practise, the very same in which I was formerly seldom or never exercised? And shall I not do all that lies in my power to save my children all this pains, this struggle, this constraint, this conflict with themselves, to preserve them from the cruel tyranny of evil passions, to make what is difficult to me easy to them, to render the narrow path of life, of virtue and happiness, as smooth and pleasant

as it can be to them, and as now it would have been to me, if I had had a better education? Shall I give them cause hereafter to think on me with displeasure, to groan under the sad effects of my negligence probably all their lives, and load me with deserved reproaches for it?

Again, add reflection to what your own experience tells you on the subject, and let that likewise teach you the exceeding great importance of education. Represent to yourself how durable the first impressions generally are which we receive of natural and moral objects; how deep the first doctrines, principles, affections, habits, whether good or bad, strike root in the human soul; how great in particular the force of example; how much the understanding and temper of the childish, juvenile and manly age, are dependent on each other, how firmly they are grounded in each other, and therefore how much is effected by the first formation of the mind and heart. Frequently represent to yourself, that your children, your scholars, will cease in time to be children or scholars; that they will shortly obtain the full use of their liberty, and be left

to the management of themselves; that they then enter into various connexions with other persons; that they will probably fill important posts in the church or the state; that, in whatever station they are placed, they will always have a greater or less influence on the welfare of many others; that they probably may make thousands either happy or unhappy, according as their temper and conduct shall be framed: and then advert to the important consequences which a good or bad education may and must have in all these respects. Think on the great and lasting service you afford by a wise and christian education to the whole body of society, and compare it with the immense and irreparable injury you bring upon it by the omission or neglect of this duty. Figure to yourself in particular the influence which the education you give your children or your scholars, will have on the education they will hereafter bestow on their children or scholars; and tremble at the thoughts of committing errors, which the reverence wherein you are held will in a manner sanction, and which may be even injurious to your children's children, to remote posterity.

To conclude, transport yourself, for giving more force and efficacy to these considerations; frequently transport yourself in imagination to your death-bed; and there let your children and their offspring be gathered round you. Ask yourself what at that time will contribute most to your repose and to your consolation? Will it be the recollection of the multiplicity of dissipations and diversions you have shared in, to the neglect of their careful and christian education; or the thoughts on the continued and earnest pains you have employed in training up your children to virtue? Will it be the idea of the riches and jewels that you leave to your heirs, and the other outward distinctions you have procured them; or the sentiment of the wise lessons, and the virtuous and godly example you have set before them? Would you then remain firm to the principles and maxims you have communicated to them, and enjoin them with your dying lips what you have constantly recommended to them by your words and deeds; or would you then see yourself constrained to alter your language, to condemn your own principles and your own conduct, to warn

them of the fatal influence of it, and to represent to them, as things which have miserably deceived you, and are unworthy of esteem and love, what you have taught them to esteem and to prize above all things? Which will render your departure from them most easy? If you can say to them: I leave you in the possession of treasures, of honour, of power, of all the means to procure the pleasures of sense, and to gratify your passions; or if you are able to address them thus: I leave you wisdom and virtue and the fear of God, as the guides and companions of your life, and the favour of heaven and the hope of a blessed immortality for your lasting comfort? O what reproaches, what anguish of mind, what stings of conscience, must neglected education cause to parents, or teachers and guardians, in the last days and hours of their life, on beholding their children, or their wards and pupils, through their fault running the career of folly and vice; when they represent to themselves all the dreadful consequences their negligent conduct may and probably will produce to their remote, still unborn posterity; when they reflect on the account they

must shortly give to the omniscient judge of the universe; when they transport themselves by meditation into the eternal world, and have reason to fear that they shall there be accused by their children and descendants as the occasion of their ruin! Can you conceive a more deplorable condition than this?—On the other hand, how vast must be the pleasure, how transporting the joy, which must diffuse itself through the souls of parents and teachers at their departure from the present scene, on beholding those who were committed to their care proceeding along the path of wisdom and virtue; when they contemplate them as good, useful, pious persons, citizens, parents, teachers, magistrates, subjects; when they think on the blessed influence of their sentiments and example on the general happiness of their brethren; when they have just reason to consider themselves in the light of benefactors both to the present and the future generations of mankind, and thence obtain the well founded hope of rejoining them hereafter in a better world who were the dearest to them here, and of enjoying in their society the fruits of their mutual integrity! What

feelings, my friends! What prospects! How gloriously will they be recompensed for their pains and care, how richly will they be remunerated for whatever vain and transient pleasures they may have sacrificed to the faithful discharge of their duty! Oh may you all who have any share in the business of education, or ought to be engaged in it, hereafter taste the sweets of this reward, and be animated now by the idea of it to persevering fidelity in the execution of this most sacred of trusts!

SERMON VII.

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL AND MOST USUAL FAULTS IN EDUCATION.

ALMIGHTY God, by the constitution which thou hast established in nature, the children of men are born in an extremely feeble and dependent condition. Far more weak and dependent, liable to far more accidents than the beasts of the field, they make their entrance on this state of being. And it is only by slow degrees, nor till late, that they arrive at greater strength and independence. But this also is the arrangement of thy wise paternal kindness. It is thy design to elevate us far above the brute creation, by forming us into rational, moral creatures; and this cannot be effected but by intercourse with other already more evolved creatures, not without continual instruction from them; and this intercourse, this instruction would not take place, if thou hadst not so intimately connected us together and made us so dependent

on each other. O everlasting Father, we adore thy will, and thank thee for the connexions in which thou hast placed us both with our parents and with our children, and for the manifold advantages thou hast granted us thereby. Bless to the furtherance of thy gracious purposes in this respect, the considerations in which we are now about to engage. Let us attentively and impartially hearken to the voice of truth, and with willing obedience follow her suggestions and precepts. These and all other mercies we implore thee to grant us in the name of our saviour Jesus, who in every good lesson and example is the spotless pattern of our conduct, and who also taught us in what form it behoves us to present our requests unto thee. Our father, &c.

EPHES. vi. 4.

Ye fathers,—bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

AS the education of children, the formation of their mind and their heart, is undoubtedly the most important, so likewise is it

the most arduous task of parents. When we consider how much depends on the first impressions that are made on the human mind; how deep they sink, and how difficult it is to efface them afterwards; when we consider how strong and almost invincible the authority of prejudice and custom is, and how much trouble it costs us to forsake the way we have often trod, on which we have found many comforts and satisfactions, and which we have long taken for the safest and the best: we must infalibly perceive of what infinite moment it is, whether we imbibe good or bad, true or false principles and rules of conduct early in our youth, whether the goods and advantages of this world are represented to us in this manner or in that, whether we are imbued with groveling or generous sentiments, whether virtue and piety are instilled into us, or whether our hearts are allured to vice and to a contempt for God and Christ. Every thing afterwards turns out accordingly. We have accordingly more or fewer difficulties to conquer on the way of virtue; and accordingly will it be easier or harder for us to reach our destination, and to be happy here and hereaf-

ter. How important therefore on these considerations must the education of children be! But on the other hand how arduous the undertaking! When we consider how much attention, intelligence, care, patience, and perseverance are requisite, and how much pains it demands to oppose the current of general, but not therefore the less hurtful manners and customs; when we consider, what a diversity there is in the natural capacities, the propensities and characters of mankind, how easily we may run into extremes either on one side or on the other, by being too severe or too lenient, and how often we are tempted to indolence and relaxation in our efforts, from the uncertainty of ever reaping the fruit we expected from them: we must soon find, that this task presupposes considerable abilities, and is attended with much trouble. However, the more certain it is, pious hearers, that the education of children is an extremely important and difficult business, so much the more reason had the apostle to exhort christians to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and so much the less will you be dis-

satisfied with me, if I discourse to you to-day on a duty of such universal obligation, which is so seldom observed with due care, and yet on the observance whereof the welfare of those that are the dearest to us in a great measure depends. But, as the subject is too copious to be treated of at once in its full extent, I shall do no more at present than warn you of some of the principal and most usual mistakes in the education of children. Do thou, O God, thyself dispose the hearts of my hearers to a ready acceptance of these suggestions, and excite them to the faithful application of them. Dispel by the light of truth, the prejudices that may have hitherto stood in their way, and let the fruit of this discourse be manifested in the virtuous conduct of the children whom thou hast entrusted to them!

The first fault I observe in the education of children is this, that sensuality is allowed to gain the ascendency over them, and that this source of moral corruption is not sufficiently checked. The creator has doubtless given us the senses for wise and good purposes. They are the means whereby we ac-

quire our first conceptions and ideas. They supply our reason with matter for thoughts and consideration. They warn us of what is pernicious, what may hurt our body, impair our health, and destroy our life. They are instruments by which the author of our nature has made us susceptible of various pleasure; and we should run counter to his will, were we entirely to deprive ourselves of this pleasure, or hold it be absolutely sinful. By means of the images of outward things which we acquire by the senses, sensations are produced in us, which in many cases are able of themselves alone, to give the needful vivacity to our determinations, and to guard us from the detriment which cold and tedious deliberation in limited creatures like us might occasion; sensations that irresistibly impel us to many actions, which we should either totally neglect, or which we should not perform with due promptitude and spirit, were we barely directed by the decisions of reason. But, useful and necessary as sensible representations and feelings are in all these respects; no less baleful is the influence they have on our character and our con-

duct, if we depend too much upon them, if we submit to be ruled and governed by them. This however happens whenever we judge of the qualities and value of external objects merely by the impression they make on our senses; whenever we so far addict ourselves to sensual pleasures, and thereby strengthen our natural abhorrence to whatever is unpleasant and painful, that we cannot deny ourselves the former without extreme uneasiness, nor submit to the latter without many inward struggles or much outward coercion; that we always, or generally at least, prefer a present pleasure to a future, though the future one be much greater and more lasting than the present; and that we are more careful to avoid a trifling present evil, than by a voluntary endurance of it to be exempted from a future one that is much more considerable and much more lasting. In him that is so minded, sensuality has the upper hand. But how fertile in pernicious consequences! Is it not sensuality that deprives the soul of its vigour, degrades it to a lower rank of creatures, and teaches a man to think and act as if he were entirely carnal? Is it not sensuality, which by

directing all his thoughts and affections solely to the present and visible, deprives him of all avidity and capacity for employment about spiritual and heavenly objects, for raising himself to the invisible deity, and agreeably to his destination providing for the future world? Is it not sensuality that inspires the generality of persons with an insuperable abhorrence for every thing that is called labour and pains, that requires a particular exertion of the powers of the mind, or a painful opposition to our cupidity, and thus hinders them from being any thing more in virtue and piety than young beginners? Is it not sensuality that for the same reason renders it so difficult, nay impossible for them to prefer the general prosperity to their own private emolument, to sacrifice any pleasures and accommodations to their duty and the happiness of their brethren, and to engage in such affairs as are of the highest utility to society, but unpleasant and troublesome in themselves? In short, is it not sensuality which disables them to maintain the dignity of rational and immortal creatures, the dignity of true christians, to form themselves upon the model of holiness which

their redeemer gave them, and to pursue such a course as is consistent with a citizen and inheritor of heaven? But in general do we take the necessary pains for preventing these sad effects of a predominant sensuality, by a careful and prudent education of children, and thus to ease them in the discharge of their duties? Do we strive to keep their propensity to sensual pleasure within due bounds? Do we check the growth of it by proper vigilance and precaution? Do we not rather endeavour all we can to strengthen this propensity, and to assist it in gaining the ascendancy over reason? How are children in general incited to the observance of their duty, to industry and application? Is it not by promising them such objects as flatter their senses, please their palate, amuse their sight, &c.? How are they deterred from the commission of this or that folly or fault? Is it not by threatening them with such punishments as cause them bodily pain, or by depriving them of such benefits and distinctions as most agreeably affect their senses? Are not thus all their thoughts, appetites, and view directed to sensible objects? Are they not thus accustomed to proceed in

their determinations and actions merely according to the sensible pleasure or displeasure they have to hope or to fear from it? And when they have thus thought, judged, and acted for ten, fifteen, or a greater number of years, how difficult must it be for them afterwards to conduct themselves by other rules and upon other principles, and to oppose and abandon habits that have struck such deep roots within! How strange must all that appear to them which reason and religion tell us of temperance, of moderation, of self-denial and of mastering our lusts and appetites! How prompt they will be to decide upon all these as extravagant demands, as impossible attainments and unnecessary pursuits, and to exclaim with those jews of old: This is an hard saying, who can hear it? Nay, how easily may they thence be induced even to reject religion and virtue as too austere governors, and to give themselves up to the grossest excesses! Lamentable prospects for parents, who still retain some fear of God, and have the welfare of their children at heart!

Would you preserve your children from these deviations: do your utmost to prevent

sensuality from gaining the ascendant in their breasts. Strive to encourage them to obedience and duty more by rational representations suited to their capacities of the influence their conduct must have on their future welfare, than by the present and visible pleasures of sense. Begin to cultivate their minds as early as possible. Teach them betimes to attend to the natural good and ill consequences of their actions. Endeavour to inspire them with a predominant love of order and truth. In regard to their diet, their apparel, their employment and mode of life, avoid every thing that may administer to indolence, effeminacy, and a too delicate sensibility. Shew them no particular tokens of compassion even when some slight mishap befalls them, or if they suffer very tolerable pains, and treat these accidents and these pains as trifles undeserving of attention. Set not too great a value on their puerile amusements. Accustom them by degrees to view such objects as are agreeable to them and are harmless in themselves, to observe whatever is beautiful and excellent in them, and to discourse of them with others, without any violent longings after them,

or immoderate trouble at the want of them. But exercise them principally in this, to refrain at times from an allowable pleasure, or abruptly to leave it, for the discharge of some higher duty, or the performance of some weightier business; and evince greater satisfaction at these proofs of rational obedience, than at all other demonstrations of assiduity and address. In these exercises consists all real virtue during the present state of discipline and trial; and it is impossible without them to arrive at any superiour degree of proficiency in it.

A second no less noxious and common error in the education of children is, that pains are taken to cherish their pride, instead of repressing it, and instead of giving them a modest and humble opinion of themselves. There is no vice that more early or more easily takes possession of the human heart than pride; and yet there is no vice more unbecoming us, feeble, necessitous and sinful creatures, none that keeps us at a greater distance from the kingdom of heaven, and leads us into more perilous by-paths than this. We are naturally but too much inclined to account our-

selves far greater and better than we actually are. If this disposition be strengthened and encouraged in our younger years, it soon so captivates and blinds us, that afterwards we may very often labour in vain to free ourselves from its tyrannical sway. It has the art of dazzling us in such a manner as to prevent us from seeing our own faults and infirmities, and therefore from ever setting ourselves in earnest to correct them. It makes us deaf to the admonitions and suggestions of our teachers, our friends, nay of our own conscience. It prevents us on important occasions from seeking information, counsel, and assistance from others, as we ascribe more wisdom, prudence, and force to ourselves than we in fact possess. We then despise the temptations to ill, and are plunged into them before we are able to take the proper precautions against them. We give ourselves little or no trouble about improving in knowledge and virtue, imagining we have already brought ourselves to a very great degree of perfection in them. We find in short a thousand difficulties both in the doctrines and precepts of christianity, because they are at variance with our high

conceits and our sinful passions; and the terms whereon we are offered grace and salvation by the gospel, displease us, because they are in opposition to our pride. Can we then ever be too early or too earnest in combatting this foe to our perfection and happiness? Can we ever be too careful in refusing it access to the hearts of children? But is this indeed always done, pious hearers? Do we endeavour to inspire them with modest and humble opinions of themselves? No! On the contrary, we generally neglect nothing that can beget and nourish in them self-conceit. They are taught to have high notions of their beauty, or of their illustrious pedigree, or of other insignificant distinctions. Every judicious answer they give is held up for admiration, every laughable trick by which they amuse us is pronounced to be a sign of peculiar acuteness and ingenuity. These ambiguous proofs of their wit are repeated in their presence, and every body contributes to heighten the encomiums which they do not deserve. Every instance of industry or obedience is attributed to them as a peculiar merit; while nothing more should

be done than assuring them that in this respect they have fulfilled their duty, and thus attended on their own advantage. Some people require their children to be shewn almost the same tokens of reverence as are due to persons advanced in life, and even pretend to be affronted when they are treated by others as children. So much interest is taken in all that concerns them, in supplying their wants before they are felt, in gratifying their wishes the instant they are formed, that they must of necessity imagine themselves important members of society and invested with a distinguished station in it. On the other hand all their follies and faults are readily excused, even though they proceed from premeditated malice. All is attributed to childish playfulness, to the want of consideration and attention; at least they are excused to others on this score, that the children may be spared what is in fact a salutary shame and confusion; and thus they are accustomed to prize above all things the empty praises of men, and to give themselves more concern about the vain appearance than the essentials of rectitude and virtue. But who does not see that

this nourishes pride in their heart, and banishes true humility from it?

Would you guard your children from this vice so fruitful in pernicious effects, you whom God has made parents, guardians and tutors; often remind them of the feeble, necessitous, impotent, and dependent condition they are in. Set no higher value on their capacities and good qualities than they actually have. Teach them to consider all as the unmerited gift of the Most High, who never allows us to exalt ourselves above others, but has made it our most indispensable duty by all means to serve others and be useful to them. Commend them but seldom in their presence, and never permit others to give them extravagant praise. Never connive at their faults and transgressions, and endeavour to bring them to a just sense of that moral corruption, which has weakened the powers of the human soul, and disturbed their harmony. Shew them upon all occasions, how little reason they have to boast of their health, their beauty, their strength, their talents, their ingenuity, or to rely upon them; how soon they may lose all these advantages; how

far they are excelled by many others in all these respects; and how weak, how imperfect, how frail, how unstable are in general the knowledge, the virtue and the happiness of mortals. Lead them at length into the school of the Redeemer, instruct them in his condescending and magnanimous love to mankind; set his humility and meekness before them, as the pattern for their imitation; and imprint it deeply on their tender and susceptible hearts, that it is impossible to be a true christian and to be happy, unless we imitate and resemble the Saviour, no less in these than in all the virtues. How much would these sentiments facilitate to them the discharge of all the other duties of christianity? What a mild and benign light, what a genial lustre would it diffuse over all their good qualities and their real merits, and how would they find themselves stimulated by it to disregard those things that are behind, and to be constantly stretching forward to superiour stages of perfection!

A third capital fault in the education of children is, that they are not taught properly to judge of the privileges, pleasures, and oc-

cupations of life. How various are the false ideas that are communicated to the infant mind concerning all these things; and how fatal the influence which these errors afterwards have on the whole of their moral conduct. Children are generally taught to look upon superfluity, elevation, rank, authority, outward respect, as possessions in themselves deserving of our utmost esteem, and which confer a real value on such as possess them; as possessions, the want or privation whereof renders mankind absolutely wretched, and which consequently are worthy of the greatest endeavours to obtain, and of all possible care to preserve. They are made too early attentive to the difference of ranks in society; their natural disposition to behave themselves friendly, kind, and serviceable to all men, without respect of persons, is thus repressed; they are forbidden to discover any sort of familiarity towards persons of inferiour extraction, but of good morals, or even occasionally to converse with them; and they are inspired by degrees, if not with a sovereign contempt, yet certainly a great indifference and insensibility towards all who are not in possession of so great a fortune or such

outward distinctions as themselves. Riches are described to them as far more desirable than virtue, poverty and humility as more hideous than vice. The temporal advantages, the pleasures and diversions they are in a few years to expect, are depicted to them in such lively and glowing colours, that they long for the enjoyment of them with the utmost avidity, and make them the ultimate object of all their wishes. And what sort of instruction is generally given them concerning the destination of man and the business of life? We must work, it is said, to acquire food and raiment; we must keep a steady eye to our own interest, and let no opportunity escape unemployed for promotiong it; we must use all diligence to heap up treasures, to raise ourselves above meanness, and distance all those who have the same object in view; we must entirely comply with the received customs and manners, be they good or bad, reasonable or unreasonable, that we may not be reckoned an unsociable monster, and thus stand in the way of our own advancement; we must know how to live, that is, we must know how to render ourselves agreeable to every one by

dissimulation, flattery, and falsehood, and to gain the love of every body, and to be cautious of speaking what we think, or of judging, as the nature of the case requires. These are the principal lessons generally instilled into the minds of children preparatory to their entrance on the world, and for rendering them dexterous in the management of their future affairs. No wonder, if in the sequel, blinded by these prejudices, they cleave entirely to the earth, if they are actuated by the meanest and most sordid selfishness, and are incapable of all generous and magnanimous actions. No wonder if they conform in all respects to the world, fall down the stream of prevailing corruption without opposition or resistance, and satisfy themselves with the empty applause, that they are not murderers, not robbers, not profligates. No wonder if the last thing they think of is to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, if they least of all concern themselves about the improvement and salvation of their immortal spirit, and so live as though after death they had nothing to hope for or to fear.

Parents, are ye desirous that your children should avoid the ways of folly and vice, would you conduct them into the path of eternal wisdom; give them sounder notions of the advantages, the pleasures, and the affairs of this life. Teach them to understand these objects as analogous to their present and future happiness. Warn them of the deceitfulness of sense, of the dazzling lustre that surrounds the great and powerful of the earth, of the apparent happiness which high station and great wealth promise their possessors. Shew them, that peace of mind and the placid temper are very often to be found in humble dwellings, and but seldom in splendid habitations and gorgeous palaces. Tell them, that it is not rank, not titles, not authority, that deserve our esteem, but the just and proper use of them; that only virtue and integrity, the real merit of the man can do him honour, and give him any real precedence above others; and that the meanest day-labourer, who is faithful to his duties, is of infinitely more consideration in the sight of the Most High, than the crowned prince who misuses his power to the oppression of the guiltless. Tell them,

that only vice degrades the man; that God is as much the creator, and father of the poor as of the rich; that we should consider ourselves all as brethren, and heartily love and serve each other according to our abilities. Inform them how vain and empty are all the delights of the world, how often the acutest pain, the bitterest remorse, the cruelest vexations, follow the inordinate enjoyment of them; and how dreadfully they are deceived who seek their happiness in them. Represent to them the occupations of this life, the discharge of the duties of their calling, not merely as means for procuring a livelihood, or becoming opulent, and passing their days in indolence and ease, but as means for applying our talents and capacities to the service of our fellow creatures, and for contributing somewhat to the publick weal. Teach them to think generously and disinterestedly, and not to make their own private emolument so much as the welfare of the community to which they belong, the ultimate aim of their exertions. Make it often a matter of encouragement to them, that they have an immortal soul, capable of a never-ending portion; that

this earth is not the place where the scope and design of their being terminated; that the Almighty has formed them for eternity; that he has placed them here in a state of exercise and probation, which they are to employ in preparing and qualifying themselves for the future life, and that this is infinitely the greatest concern they have here to mind. This way of thinking and judging will secure them from the path of corruption, and render them wise to everlasting felicity.

Lastly, I observe as a fourth principal fault in the education of children, that we choose rather to instrust them by precept than by example. Precepts make by no means so deep and permanent an impression on them as example; and whenever this is wanting, the other is for the most part of no avail. The reason of it is apparent. The senses and the imagination in children are far more busy than the understanding; and they are much more disposed to imitate what they see and hear, than to investigate the propriety or the impropriety of it by painful reflection. Experience tells us, that very frequently the most excellent principles are not able to withstand the force of bad

example; and on the other hand that sometimes beautiful patterns of virtue and piety will amply supply the defect of instruction. How often however do parents or tutors content themselves with giving excellent rules of conduct to their children or pupils, without attending to their observance themselves! Nay how often do they deprive their doctrines and precepts of their proper effect by pursuing a course at variance with them, and render religion and virtue themselves suspected and contemptible by such inconsistency! This is the principal reason that all their remonstrances, cautions, admonitions, and corrections are so frequently to no purpose. Their own example counteracts them, and they derive no fruit from all their labours.

Would you enjoy these delicious fruits, ye to whom God has entrusted children; demonstrate the necessity, the propriety, the beauty of the virtues you recommend to their regard, by the studious and constant practice of them. Would you that your children should fear God and serve him in spirit and in truth; let a real fear of God be perceptible in you. Never mention that glorious being without

the profoundest veneration, beware of every abuse of his sacred name; frequent the exercises of publick and private worship with undissembled devotion; ascribe all the advantages you enjoy to the unmerited grace of the Most High, and adore all his ways in humble submission. Would you that your children should learn justice, equity, humanity, and liberality; let them be the witnesses of your hearty endeavours to fulfill these duties yourself. Condemn, without respect of persons every unjust, every merciless action; and place it in such a light that it shall excite their aversion and abhorrence. Rejoice with them in every opportunity of doing good to others, and do not easily allow any indigent or afflicted person to go from you uncomforted or unrelieved. Would you that your children be temperate, chaste, and modest; be clothed with these virtues yourself. Avoid every thing that is in the most distant degree offensive to decorum in your words, your carriage, and your actions, whatever may give rise to irregular thoughts and desires. Exercise yourself in abstinence, and shew them, that you can forego many things, which

are pleasant and agreeable, without being therefore uneasy or unhappy. Would you teach your children gentleness and humility; suffer not yourself to be transported by anger in their presence, but govern your spirit. Never boast of your distinctions, and despise no man who does not render himself despicable by folly and vice. Be not imperious and overbearing with those who owe you obedience; and shew by your behaviour towards them, that you acknowledge them for your fellow creatures, that you love them and take an interest in their welfare. Forgive with all your heart those that offend you, and take heed not to let any rancorous sentiments appear. To conclude, would you train up your children to be citizens of heaven; pursue yourself a heavenly course. Testify a generous disdain for all that is transient and earthly. Frequently contrast the present with the future. Look more at the invisible than at the visible, and so frame your life, that all men may conclude from it, that you have nothing more at heart than to deliver your soul, and to be admitted to the felicities of heaven.

Observe but this and the foregoing rules of conduct, and you will certainly no more fall into those mistakes of which you have been warned in the present discourse. You will, according to the admonition in our text, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and the Lord will certainly not leave your endeavours unblest, if they be but constant and sincere. He will hereafter award to you the glorious recompense which he has promised to his faithful stewards and servants. And what a happiness, what a transporting satisfaction it will be to you, when you appear, undaunted, before the judge of the living and the dead, when you ceerfully give him an account of the discharge of your trust, and surrounded by your family, can say to him: Lord, behold me, and the children whom thou gavest me.

THE END.